DOCUMENTS ON THE EVENTS PRECEDING THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR

Compiled and published by the
German Foreign Office

BERLIN, 1939
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Published by the

GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE

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WHITE BOOK AND BLUE BOOK

PREFATORY NOTE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION OF *DOCUMENTS ON THE EVENTS PRECEDING THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR.*

The American edition of *Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of the War* is a faithful rendition of the German original with minor additions. These additions to the present volume are summaries of official German replies to the *British War Blue Book,* the *French Yellow Book* and so forth. These will be found in the Supplement.

The German White Book was published several weeks after the *British War Blue Book, Documents Concerning German-Polish Relations and the Outbreak of Hostilities between Great Britain and Germany on September 3, 1939.* The publication of the American edition was delayed by the necessity of translating the text into English and of comparing quotations, retranslated in some cases from German into English, with the originals wherever possible. The English edition printed in Berlin, is not available in the United States because the illegal British interference with the mails is directed not only against goods for enemy consumption but against printed matter likely to elucidate the causes of war. England's contraband list is large; at the head of the list stands Truth.

The German White Book, presented herewith, is not a reply to the British Blue Book. Unlike the Blue Book, it is history, not journalism. It is accurate, not superficial, genuine, not juggled. The British Blue Book contains 144 documents, of which some appear in the present volume. The German White Book presents 482 important state papers, unretouched by the editors. It is not specious pleading.

Some of the documents have already appeared in the First German White Book, *Documents Concerning the Last Phase of*

the German-Polish Crisis, made available to the American public by the German Library of Information. But, whereas the first White Book, as its title indicates, contains only documents bearing on the immediate Polish-German crisis, *Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of the War* traces back the conflict to its beginning. It squarely places the responsibility for the war now raging in Europe on the shoulders of British statesmen, as Herr von Ribbentrop points out in his terse introduction.

The British are adept in the publication of Blue Books. They acquired the Blue Book habit first in 1641 and kept it up ever since. They appeal to the educated with an apparent candor, artfully concealing their propaganda. The British Blue Book of 1939 recalls another British Blue Book published in 1914. This book greatly impressed both the lay public and scholars until they discovered the trickiness with which it was compiled. Important phrases were ingeniously modified under the pretext of preserving the secrecy of code-messages by "paraphrasing" the original text. Other important phrases were lost in the scramble. Vital documents were deliberately omitted.

When the frankness of the Germans, the Austrians and the Russians after the World War compelled Downing Street to release official documents hitherto suppressed, the British Blue Book of 1914 was disowned even by British historians. The German White Book, published the same year, was not all-inclusive, but it did not distort or falsify texts. *Die Deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch,* issued by the German Government after the World War, filled gaps in the original German White Book but did not discredit or controvert it; whereas the British Blue Book, vintage 1914, became an indictment of British veracity.[1] There is reason to believe that history will pronounce

1. Compare "Refutation of the Versailles War Guilt Thesis," by Alfred von Wegerer (1930) and most standard works on the subject by British, Canadian and American scholars. Outstanding American works on the question of war guilt are "World Politics in Modern Civilization", by Harry Elmer Barnes, (New York, 1930) pp. 445-510; "Origins of the World War", by Sidney B. Fay, Vol. I. pp. 1-32; "Myth of a Guilty Nation", by Albert J. Nock; "Facing Europe", by Judge Frederick Bausman; "The Russian Imperial Conspiracy", by Senator Robert L. Owen; "Germany Not Guilty in 1914", by M. H. Cochran, and "Heroes and Villains of the World War," by C. A. Beard (Current History, August, 1926).

The most distinguished Canadian historian to reject German responsibility for the World War is Dr. John S. Ewart, whose two-volume work, "Roots and Causes of the Wars, 1914-1918", was published in New York in 1925. One of the fairest British works on the war guilt question is "The International Anarchy", by G. Lowes Dickinson (New York, 1926). Lord Loreburn's "How the War Came" (London, 1920), is a scathing indictment of Sir Edward Grey. Georges Demartial, author of "How the War Fury Was Generated", was suspended for five years from membership in the Legion of Honor by the French Government for telling the truth about war guilt.

the same judgment upon the British Blue Book published 25 years later.

British diplomats, as Bismarck once said, live in constant fear of the Blue Book. British Ambassadors are trained to color their dispatches with a view to eventual publication. This attitude of mind is engendered in all British envoys, especially when a crisis is pending. It explains the tone of Sir Nevile Henderson's dispatches purporting to report his conversations with Chancellor Hitler, von Ribbentrop, Goering and other leaders. They were intended for public consumption.

The British Blue Book adroitly confines itself—with few exceptions, which include quotations of the Fuehrer on Polish-German relations, torn from their frame of reference—to documents dating *after* Chamberlain's Birmingham speech of March 17, 1939. Downing Street attempts to create by this eclecticism the erroneous impression that its bellicose policy and the resumption of its ancient design to surround Germany with a ring of steel began *after* the collapse of the Czechoslovakian Government forced the Reich to march into Prague. Unfortunately for the British argument, its encirclement policy antedates that event. In fact, developments justify the suspicion that Chamberlain's policy of "appeasement", culminating in Munich, was only a ruse to gain time for war preparations. In the beginning it was England's aim to encourage a German conflict with Soviet Russia. If these two neighbors had exhausted their resources in futile conflict, England would have been left "sitting pretty." When this plan seemed to miscarry, Mr. Chamberlain changed his tune.

It was on September 30, 1938, that Chancellor Hitler, at the solicitation of Mr. Chamberlain, issued a joint declaration with the British Prime Minister disavowing war as an instrument of policy between Germany and Great Britain. When Chamberlain returned to London, he mouthed pious phrases about having preserved peace "in our time". But, three days later, in the House of Commons, he made a threatening speech declaring the intention of Great Britain to arm to the limit. Arm for what?—Peace in our time?

Something must have happened. Some pressure, from within and without, induced the British Prime Minister, before the cock crowed three times, to repudiate his solemn pledge. The Prime Minister's outburst was so provocative that Chancellor Hitler was compelled to clarify the situation in a firm but measured speech on October 9 at Saarbruecken. The Chancellor's suspicion of "some sea-change" in the attitude of the British Prime Minister was confirmed by the report of Ambassador von Dirksen (Document No. 234) of January 9, 1939. All these events took place *before* March 17, when at the invitation of the legally constituted government, German troops occupied the remnant of Czechoslovakia.

Not without vital significance are proofs drawn from Allied as well as German sources that the Munich settlements involved an understanding that Germany would be allowed a free hand in Central Europe. The British policy of blank checks and interference with German interests was, therefore, a violation of previous understanding. London's aim was to sabotage the peaceful and cooperative rationalization of the political and economic hodge-podge created by the last war. Germany has been forced to fight against outside interference for an aim she wished to achieve peacefully. When Germany talks of "Lebensraum" she talks of a mutually advantageous order essential to the stability of Europe—and of the world.

It is impossible to separate the Czechoslovakian and the Polish problems. Both states were pawns in the British game. The real crisis began when British statesmen took it upon themselves to draw a line through the German "Lebensraum", the vital economic space which Germany needs to live. Warnings were sounded from London that any crossing of limits arbitrarily imposed by Great Britain in contravention of common sense, geography and economics would be cause for war. What is the object of a solemn pledge to settle all problems peacefully, if it breaks down at the first disagreement? There is little doubt that England's mind was made up to violate Chamberlain's Munich pledge at the first favorable opportunity.[2]

2. Compare the report of the German Chargé d'Affaires in London, March 20, 1939, and the speech delivered by Lord Halifax at Chatham House on June 29. (Documents Nos. 272 and 312).

The British Blue Book confines itself largely to German-Polish relations of the period when the masters of Great Britain decided to fight to the last Pole in the hope of saving their tottering system. In the light of what followed, it is obvious that Britain's objective was not the protection of Poland but the determination to create a new balance of power favorable to herself. That explains the "blank check" to Poland, so callously given and so callously dishonored by London.

The British Blue Book deliberately ignores the six months preceding March, 1939 during which Germany, through Herr von Ribbentrop, repeatedly made the suggestion for a generous settlement of the Polish-German dispute to the Polish Government. The Fuehrer intervened personally on several occasions. He placed before the Polish Foreign Minister, Josef Beck, an offer so magnanimous that it left his German advisers speechless. No echo of these negotiations appears in the Blue Book; not a hint of the long patience of the Reich.

Germany's desire to come to an understanding with Poland on an equitable basis appears in the document known as the "Sixteen Points" (No. 466). This generous offer, representing a last minute effort to maintain peace in the face of Polish provocation, reached Warsaw in time to prevent the clash of arms between Germany and Poland. But the Warsaw broadcast of August 31, 11 P.M. (No. 469) rejected the German offer as "impudent". England, determined upon war, made no attempt to reason with her Polish ally. The British Ambassador, Sir Nevile Henderson, even informed Mr. Lipski, the Polish Ambassador, that negotiations with the German Government would be "futile". In vain England endeavors to explain away Poland's refusal and her own failure to clutch at what seemed the last hope for peace. It was not the last. Destiny, acting through Mussolini, offered one more chance to avert a large-scale conflict. This chance, too, was brushed aside by Great Britain (Documents Nos. 474-476). It was England, not France, that rejected Mussolini's last offer of peace after Polish hostilities had already begun. The British Blue Book prints the brief statement of the Stefani Agency on this subject, but British documents elucidating England's point of view are conspicu-

ously lacking. They are lacking because if they were published the pacific mask would fall from the face of Great Britain.

The British Blue Book evades or attempts to belittle the harrowing torments of the German minority in Poland.[3] Mr. Chamberlain need not have relied on German testimony. There were innumerable witnesses of all nationalities, including conscientious English observers, who could have enlightened him on the subject.[4] Instead of attempting to right these wrongs, his pledge to Poland was designed to perpetuate forever the sufferings of the German minority and the wrongs engendered by the Peace Treaty of Versailles. The leaders of Great Britain, in their Blue Book, completely ignore the Polish failure to keep the friendship pact, concluded in good faith between Hitler and Marshal Pilsudski. England conceals from her people that it was the deliberate violation of this agreement by Pilsudski's unworthy successors which finally compelled Chancellor Hitler to renounce the pact.

Although the British Blue Book prints numerous extracts from the Fuehrer's speeches, it deliberately withholds from the reader a complete exposition of the German viewpoint. With an artfulness that has become second nature, British diplomacy attempts to mask the ruthlessness of British imperialism. Excerpts from a few speeches by Foreign Minister Beck are interspersed to create the illusion of a "moderate" Poland, but the inflammatory speeches of Polish statesmen and Polish Generals are suppressed without the slightest compunction.

A comparison between the two books reveals: Germany's policy was positive, peaceful, progressive and rational. England's plutocratic overlords were sullenly determined to keep the world in chains by enchaining the Germans. England is battling to retain her monopoly of the sea and the ancient privileges de-

3. For an account of the atrocities inflicted on the German minority in Poland in the first few days of the war read: "Polish Acts of Atrocity Against the German Minority in Poland" with its supplement, "Pictorial Report on Polish Atrocities," published in New York by the German Library of Information.
4. "I would follow any real path, not a sham or blind alley, which led to lasting reconciliation between Germany and her neighbors . . . It would be safer to open questions like those of the Danzig Corridor . . . We might find ourselves pledged in honor and in law to enter a war against our will and against our better judgment in order to preserve those very injustices and grievances which sunder Europe today, which are the cause of present armaments and which, if not arrested, will cause another war . . ." Winston Churchill in his answer to the King's Speech, in the House of Commons, November 28, 1932. Hansard, 5th Series, Vol. 272.

rived therefrom at the expense of all mankind. Germany is fighting for a new order with equal opportunity and equal rights for all nations.

Chancellor Hitler labored long to come to an understanding with England. England was unwilling to negotiate on equal terms. Is it surprising that the Fuehrer was finally compelled to abandon his efforts? There can be no friendship without reciprocity. War was the choice of Great Britain.[5] England's determination never wavered.

Scholars for many years debated the causes of the World War of 1914. There can be no question this time as to who was guilty. The German White Book, the omissions of the British Blue Book and the investigations of historical students in many countries definitely point the finger of accusation at Great Britain.

From documents already available, and from the events themselves, any impartial student is led to the inescapable conclusion:

(1) England provoked the Polish-German War by encouraging Polish illusions of grandeur and by making promises to Warsaw which she subsequently repudiated. In the language of gamblers, she "welched" on her obligations. It should be noted in this connection that Poland does not lie within the British sphere of interest by any stretch of the imagination. No legitimate British aspiration was infringed by Germany's demand for the restoration of Danzig and a highway across the Corridor.

(2) England declared war on Germany in violation of Mr. Chamberlain's Munich pledge. Germany did not declare war on England. Germany kept her word. England deliberately converted the Polish-German conflict into a war between Germany and the Western Powers.

(3) Documents recently discovered in Norway, and published in the form of a White Book by Germany, reveal that Great Britain deliberately extended the war area to Scandinavia. The documents published in Berlin have been made available to the American reader by the press. These documents prove be-

5. See documents Nos. 455, 456, 457.

yond doubt that Germany thwarted the British invasion of Norway by only a few hours; they also reveal that the former Norwegian Government was conniving with the British.

(4) The speeches of British politicians demonstrate that England is striving with all the might of her Navy and with all the chicanery of her propaganda machine to set the whole world aflame.

The Summary of *Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of the War* refers to the German Non-Aggression Pacts with Norway and Denmark. These instruments are cited as evidence of Germany's breach of faith by Allied propagandists. Germany has no need to evade the issue. Her conscience is clear.

British violations of neutral zones rendered necessary the occupation of Denmark. Denmark readily accepted the German protection. Denmark does not look upon the occupation as an act of "aggression"; she did not cite her Non-Aggression Pact with Germany in her protest. After the German action, the King of Denmark sent a telegram of congratulation to Chancellor Hitler on his birthday, April 20, 1940. He was under no compulsion to do so; his act is an eloquent testimony to the fact that Denmark accepts the German aid in the spirit in which it was rendered.

The Norwegian Government had ceased long ago to observe a neutral attitude towards Germany. The British navy was free to sow mines in the territorial waters of Norway to tighten the blockade against Germany. British army authorities made detailed plans for cooperation with the Norwegian army. The German occupation of Norway was, therefore, a natural act of defense on Germany's part.

Since the beginning of the war, British propaganda played up the alleged German "intention" to invade Holland and Belgium at a time when no such intention existed. Every now and then specific dates were set for the outbreak of hostilities. The object of these maneuvers on the part of Great Britain was to create mistrust in these countries against Germany and to

draw them into the British orbit. This plot, unfortunately for the countries involved, succeeded. Germany eventually marched into the Low Countries, but only to forestall an Allied invasion.

However, these are developments with which we are not concerned in the present volume. They are, however, the logical consequences of the policy pursued by Great Britain in all her relations with Germany. This policy is outlined with the aid of authentic documents and incontrovertible evidence in the ensuing pages.

PREFACE

BY THE GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER, JOACHIM VON RIBBENTROP

Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, the German people look to the future, not to the past. We are fighting a battle forced upon us; we are fighting a battle for Germany's future. This struggle makes it an urgent necessity for us to remain ever conscious of how this war came about and what were its ultimate causes. For those who have eyes to see, the facts are as plain as day. Often enough they have been clearly revealed by authoritative sources, notably in the speeches of the Fuehrer. But our enemies are strenuously engaged in attempting to becloud the true facts. In their propaganda, they strive to mislead the public opinion of the world about their war aims as well as about the causes of the war. This makes it essential to establish once more —through authentic official documents—the irrefutable and proven fact that England, and England alone is responsible for the war; that England wanted war, wanted it in order to destroy Germany.

Immediately after the outbreak of the war, the German Foreign Office issued a White Book containing documents which threw light on the last phase of the German-Polish crisis.* The Foreign Office now makes public another and more inclusive collection of documents. Not confined to the period directly preceding the outbreak of war, this new collection covers much wider ground. It deals with the fundamental political events from which the conflict with Poland, and subsequently the conflict with England and France, developed.

The 482 documents published here speak plainly. They require no commentary. In the dry phraseology of diplomacy,

* "Documents Concerning the Last Phase of the German-Polish Crisis," (American Edition) German Library of Information, 17 Battery Place, New York.

they give us a direct and unretouched picture of the developments of the last years. It is a picture which still shocks and disturbs even those people who have witnessed the course of events from the very center of the stage.

These documents reveal Poland's systematic campaign of extermination against Germans in Poland and Danzig ever since the World War. They show the statesmanlike efforts of the Fuehrer, grand in outline and infinite in their patience, to find an equitable basis just to both parties. In contrast, they show the short-sighted lack of understanding of the Polish authorities, who frustrated the opportunities for a definite agreement offered again and again by Germany. Above all, we shall see how England's will to war manifests itself ever more clearly and directly after the Munich Conference. We shall learn of the delusions of the Polish Government, intentionally fostered and finally exploited by the British Government to launch its long-planned war against Germany. To be sure, an examination of the whole postwar period would require a complete account of England's hypocritical and criminal policy. The policy blocked every effort of Germany to free herself from the chains of Versailles and nullified every chance that offered itself to revise that dictate by negotiation.

The outline of events since the autumn of 1918, as revealed in the documents collected in this White Book, suffices to recognize England's determination to impede the peaceful progress of the Fuehrer by force. Without shedding a single drop of blood, without a single infringement of British interests, the Fuehrer's brilliant statesmanship had successfully rectified most grievous crimes of Versailles. He would have achieved a peaceful solution of the German-Polish problem in the same manner, if England had not misused Poland as a tool of her bellicose intentions. Through her criminal policy, England has plunged all Europe into war.

This historical fact, established for all time to come, is corroborated once more by England's rejection of the Fuehrer's last magnanimous offer of peace. England replied to the peace offer

in the Fuehrer's Reichstag Speech of October 6, 1939, with an impudent and insulting challenge to Germany. The German people accepted this challenge. They face the future and face it with unshakable confidence in their victory. Germany will not lay down her arms until her goal has been achieved. This goal is the military defeat of the enemies of the German people and the protection of the space essential to life, which is their just due, against any threat in the future.

VON RIBBENTROP,

Foreign Minister of the Reich

Berlin, December 3, 1939

Pictorial Supplement

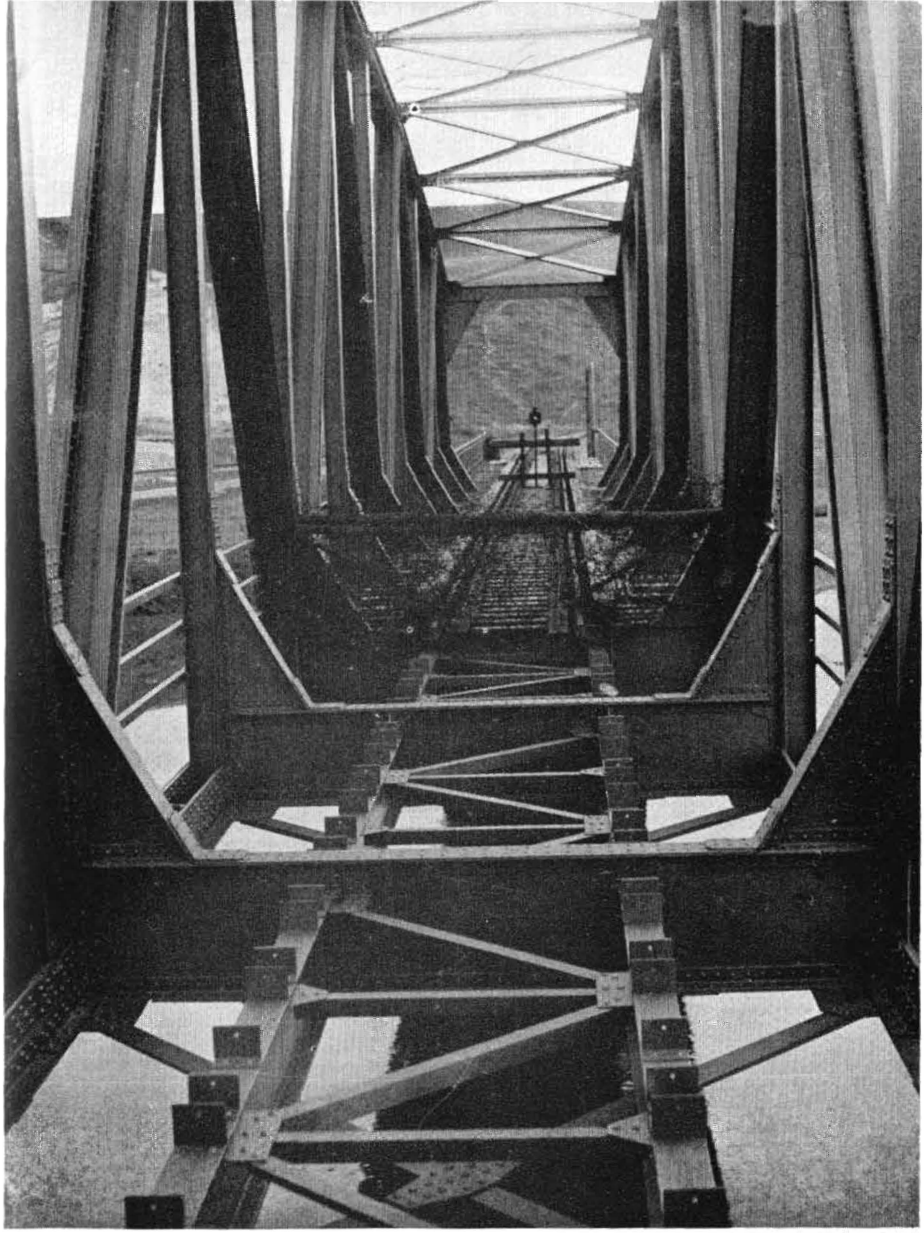
(Transatlantic)

"TRAITE DE VERSAILLES, 28 Juin 1919"

Standing somewhere in a field between the Vistula and Nogat Rivers, this monument designated the frontiers of East Prussia, Poland and the Free City of Danzig, and symbolized the folly of the Versailles Peace Conference.

WEST PRUSSIA'S CROSS

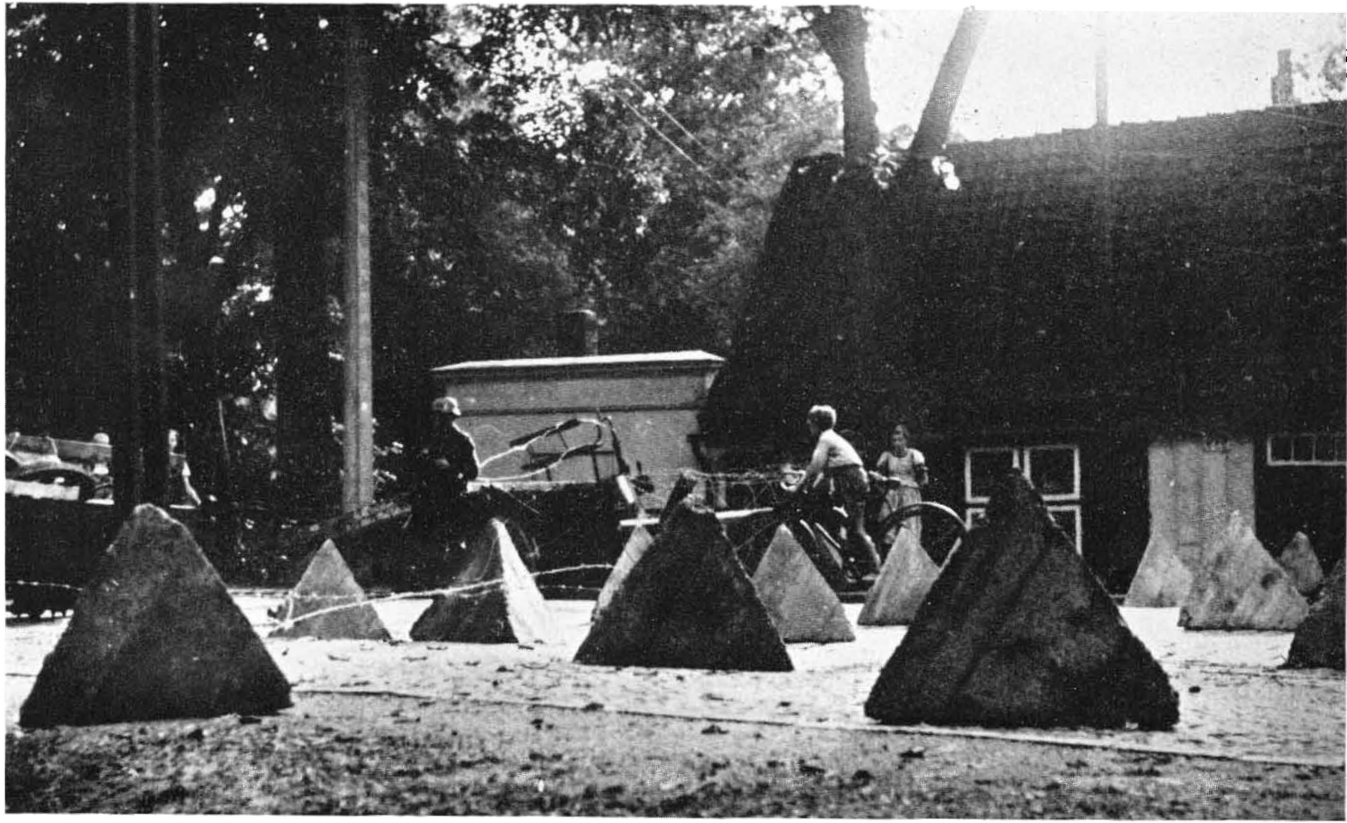
Erected upon a hill between the Vistula and Nogat Rivers, "West Prussia's Cross" could be seen from many miles away. The cross commemorates the preposterous German-Polish-Danzig border created by the men who wrote the peace treaty of Versailles in defiance of common sense and the wishes of the inhabitants.



(Transatlantic)

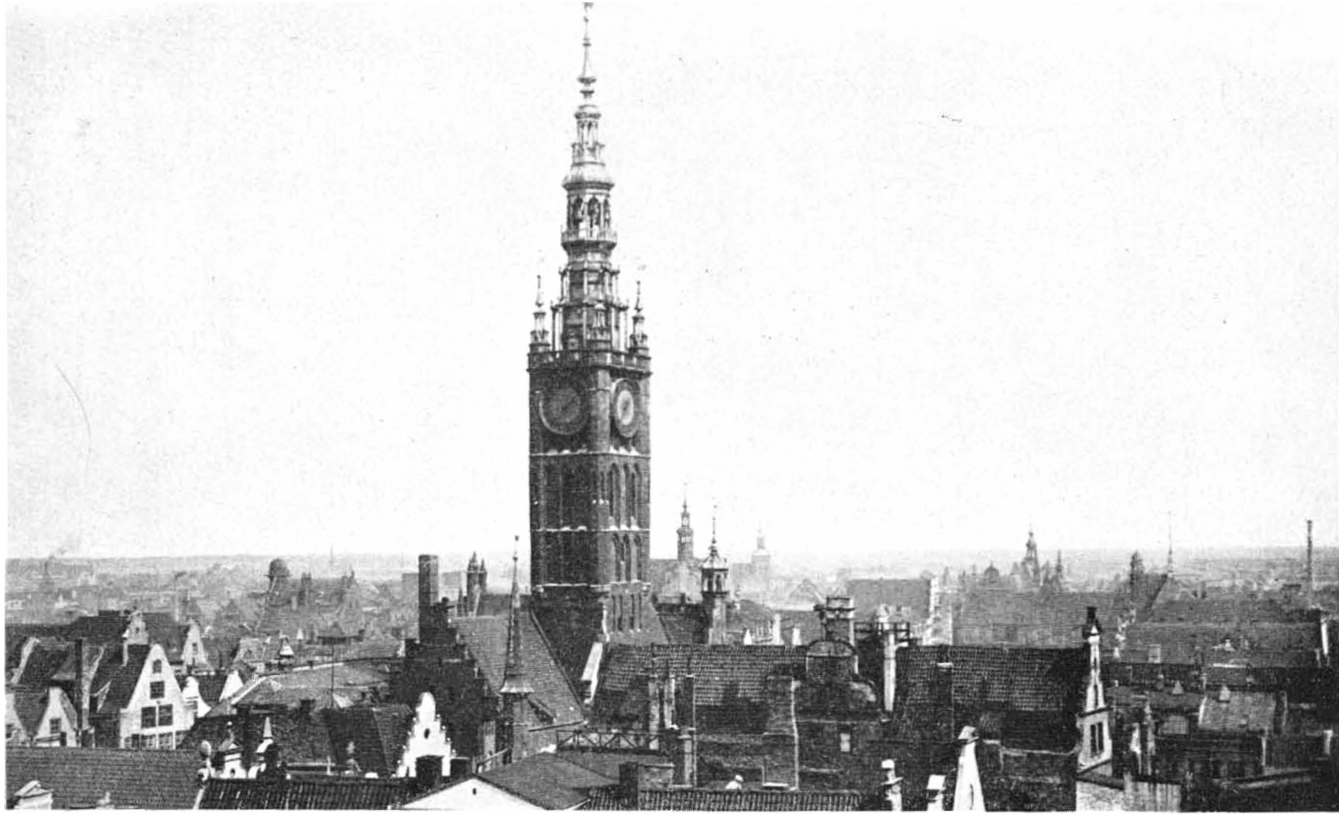
BLEEDING FRONTIER

Half of this railway bridge belonged to Germany and half to Poland. The Poles pulled out the tracks on their side. At innumerable places, the irrational German-Polish frontier ran through farmyards, separated peasants from their fields and cut homes in two.



THE POLISH-DANZIG BORDER: August 30, 1939

The tension between Poland and Danzig is vividly portrayed by barbed wire and concrete blocks. Note the broken down wagons used to discourage "border incidents".



Transatlantic

THE ANCIENT GERMAN CITY OF DANZIG

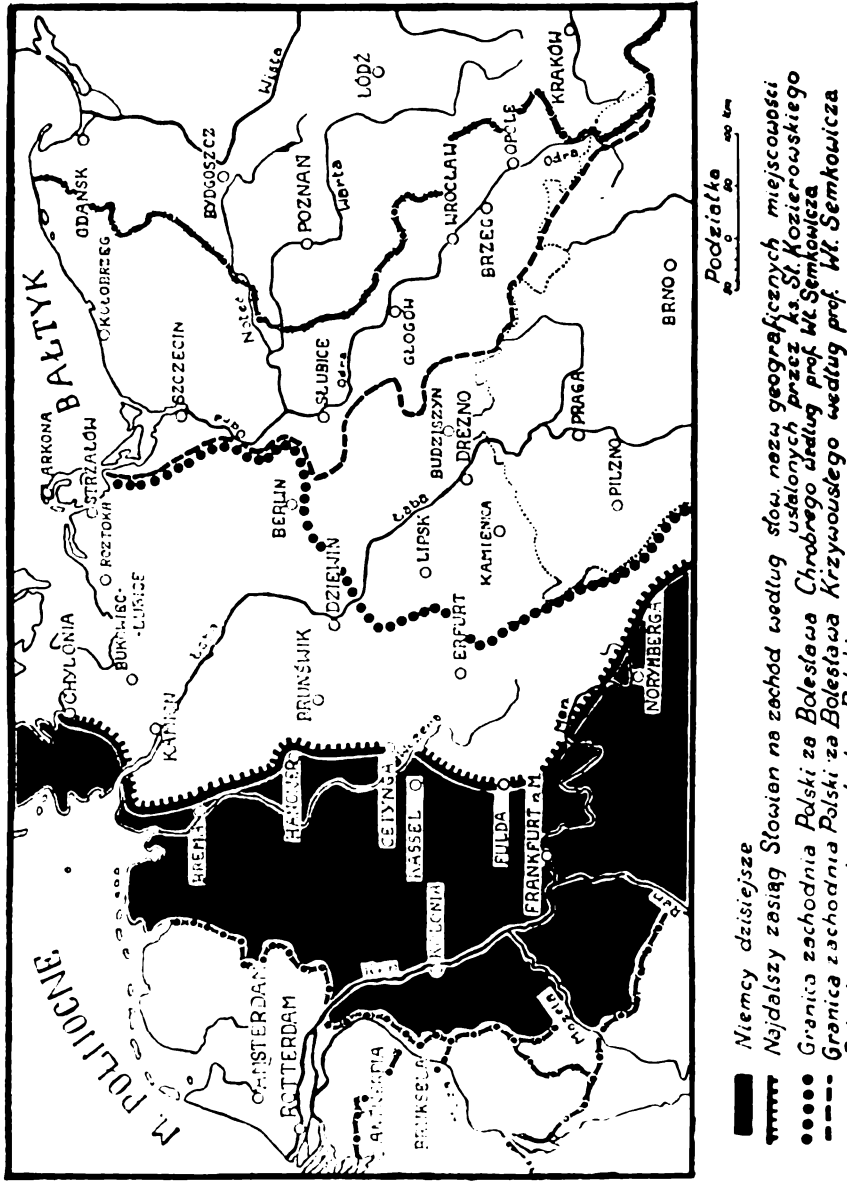
A roof-top view of the famous old Hanseatic seaport. Amid the lower buildings in the foreground stands the City Hall with its picturesque Gothic tower.

ANOTHER VIEW OF DANZIG

Looking up at part of the city from the Hundegatt. The City Hall tower, shown in closeup in the preceding picture, appears in the extreme left of the background.

IN BROMBERG

An old brick church in Bromberg, the important German industrial center in the former Polish corridor. It is in this region that the worst Polish atrocities against the German minority occurred.



POLISH DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR

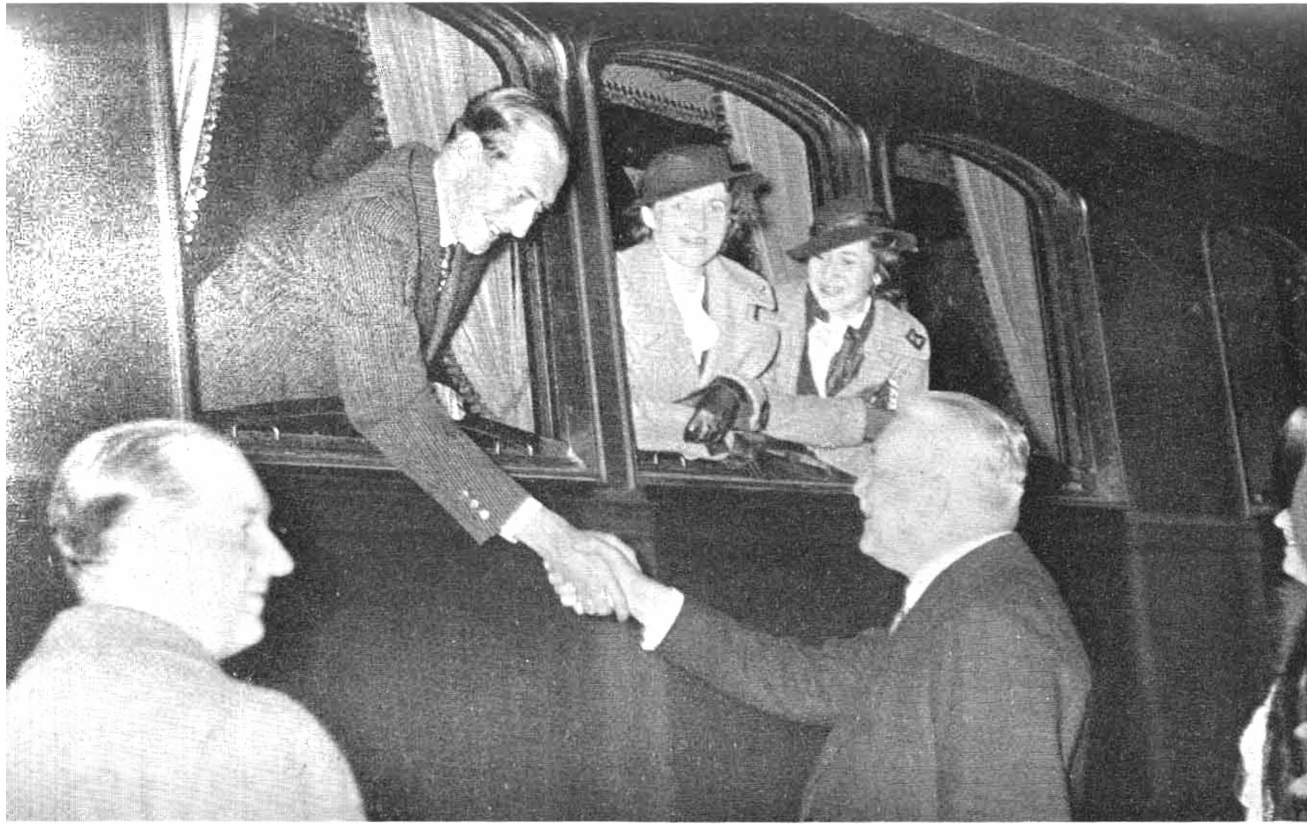
This map, published in the Posen newspaper, "Dziennik Poznanski", after the receipt of Chamberlain's "blank check", revived dreams of extending the Polish dominion to the Weser River.

POLISH AMBITIONS

Reproduction of a postcard, widely distributed in Poland, in which the Polish State reaches the very gates of Berlin. The map shows the "New Poland' envisaged by the Polish chauvinists.

POSTER EMBODYING POLISH GREED FOR GERMAN SOIL

Not only postcards but placards proclaimed the Polish determination to "regain" territories which, according to legends, largely fabricated, were once under Polish domination. Not only Berlin, but Luebeck, the ancient Hanseatic town, is included in "Polish" territory.



COLONEL BECK LEAVES BERLIN

Col. Josef Beck, Polish Foreign Minister, bidding goodbye to Count Konstantin von Neurath, formerly Foreign Minister of the Reich, now Protector of Moravia and Bohemia.

Photo from European

STATESMEN ON A HOLIDAY

From left to right: Hans-Adolf von Moltke, German Ambassador to former Poland; Ignace Moscicki, President of the vanished Polish State, accompanying Fieldmarshal Hermann Goering on a hunting trip.

(Transatlantic)

TEA AT WARSAW

Fieldmarshal Hermann Goering and Colonel Josef Beck, Polish Foreign Minister, chat at a reception in Warsaw given in honor of the distinguished guest of the Polish State.

JOACHIM VON RIBBENTROP

Germany's Foreign Minister who plays a stellar role in the vast and varied diplomatic relations of the Third Reich.

Chamberlain

A MIDNIGHT FAREWELL

The British Prime Minister is bidding goodnight to the German Chance
following a three-hour conversation at the "Rheinhotel Dreesen"
in Godesberg, September 23-24, 1938.

Transatlantic

A GERMAN SALUTE FOR A FRENCH PREMIER

German special guards stand at attention as Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop escorts Edouard Daladier, former Premier of France, to his special plane, following the historic Munich Conference on September 28, 1938.

(Hoffmann, Munich)

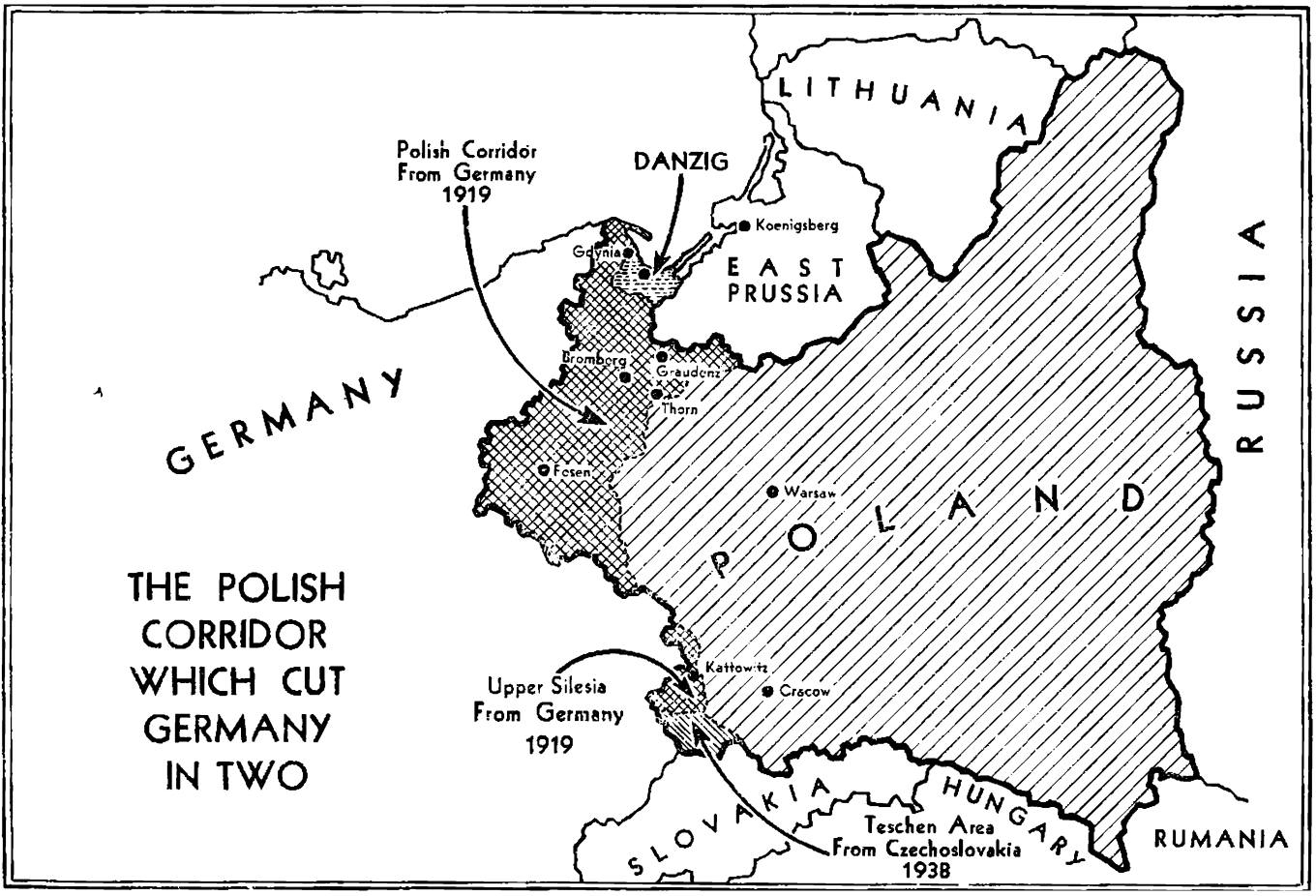
POLAND'S FOREIGN MINISTER AT OBERSALZBERG

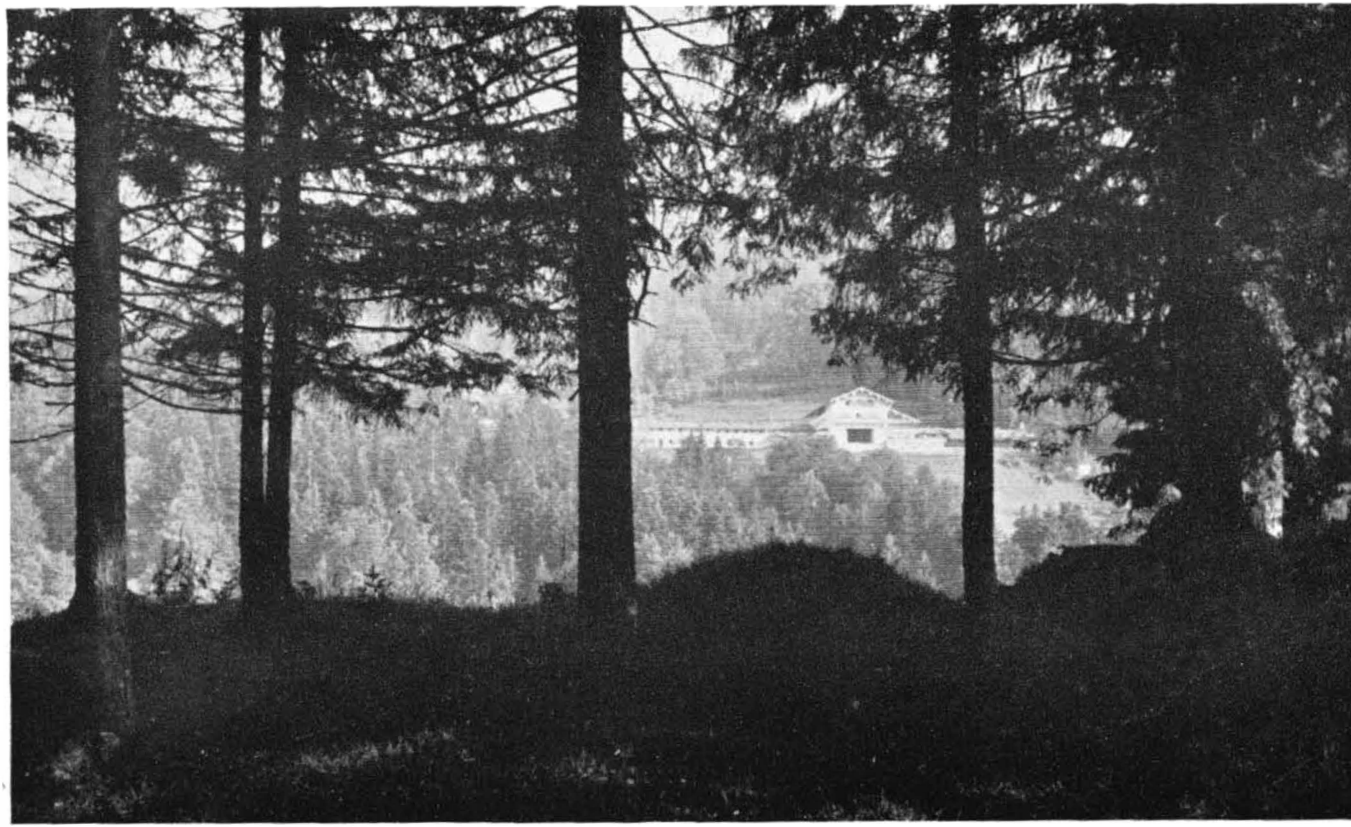
Baron von Ribbentrop greets Colonel Beck as the Fuehrer leads the way. Behind the Polish Minister is Baron von Doernberg. The man in the derby is Jòzef Lipski, Polish Ambassador to Berlin.

(Bibliographisches Institut, Leipzig)

SYNTHETIC POLAND

The former Polish State, created by the Treaty of Versailles and subsequent depredations, was by no means a unified nation. Included in its heterogeneous population were 7,000,000 Ukrainians, 3,500,000 Jews, 2,000,000 White Russians, 1,200,000 Germans, and several hundred thousand Lithuanians, Russians, Czechs, Slovaks and other nationalities.


LITHUANIA
Polish Corridor
From Germany
1919
DANZIG
Koenigsberg
Gdynia
EAST
PRUSSIA
RUSSIA
Bromberg
Graudenz
Thorn
GERMANY
Posen
Warsaw
POLAND
THE POLISH
CORRIDOR
WHICH CUT
GERMANY
IN TWO
Kattowitz
Cracow
Upper Silesia
From Germany
1919
SLOVAKIA
HUNGARY
Teschen Area
From Czechoslovakia
1938
RUMANIA



"DER BERGHOF"

Chancellor Hitler's mountain home at Berchtesgaden, Bavaria.

Hoffmann, Berlin

WHERE HITLER AND HENDERSON MET

A corner of the spacious hall in "Der Berghof", where the German Chancellor and Sir Nevile Henderson, England's Ambassador to Berlin, exchanged viewpoints that were destined to alter the current of history, August 23, 1939.

A. P. Bern

A CONFERENCE IN WARSAW

(From left to right) Marshal Smigly-Rydz, head of the Polish armed forces; Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Foreign Minister; Hans-Adolf von Moltke, German Ambassador to Warsaw, and Colonel Josef Beck, Polish Foreign Minister, meet in Warsaw in January, 1939.

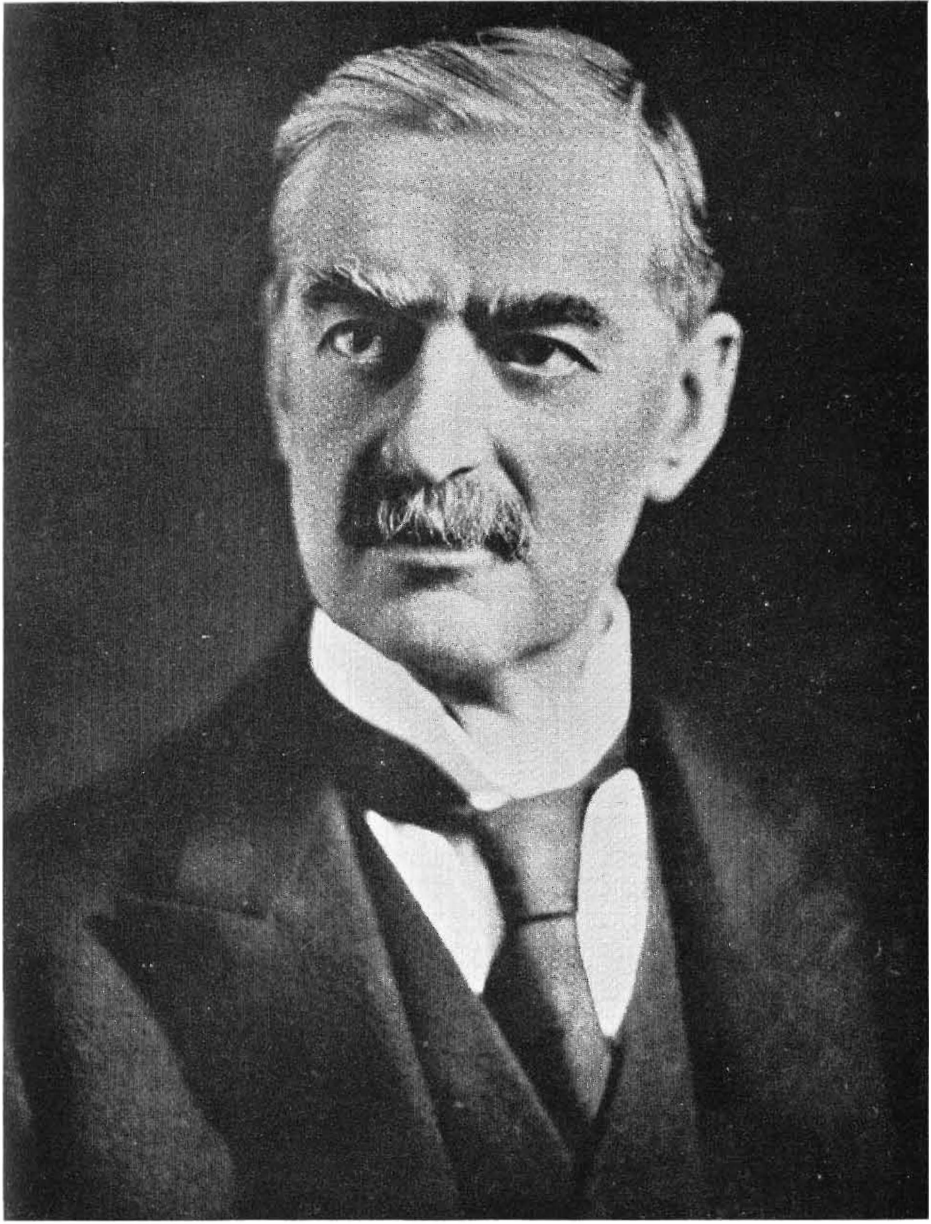
A. P. Berlin

THE POLISH ARMY IN REVIEW

Marshal Smigly-Rydz reviews his army in honor of Poland's President, Ignace Moscicki (in silk hat).

ROUGH SAILING

Lord Halifax, British Foreign Minister, and Neville Chamberlain, former British Prime Minister, crossing the English Channel for a conference at Paris.



(Wide World)

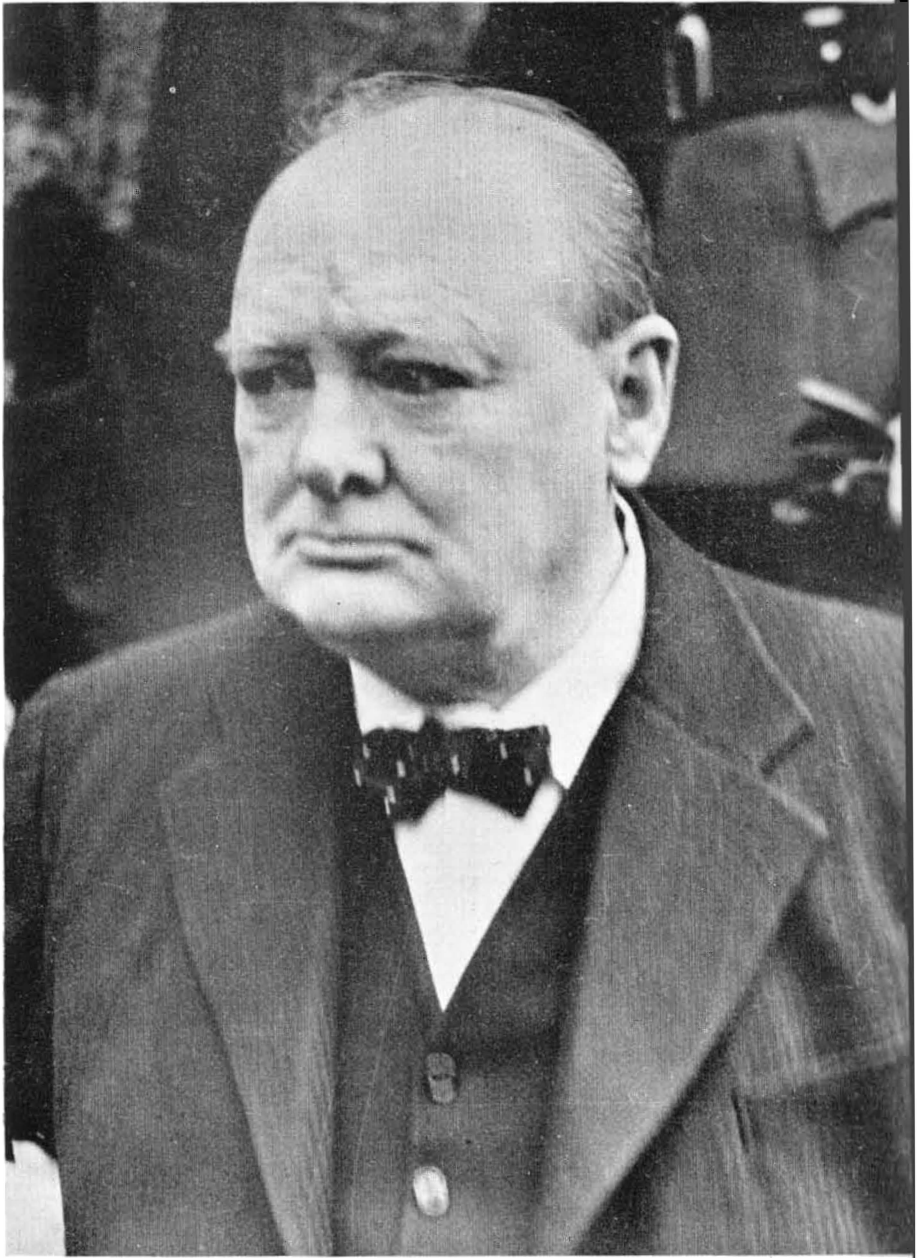
NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN

The British Prime Minister who maintained his position, which he attained shortly after the coronation of King George VI, until the disastrous British defeat in Norway early in May, 1940.

(Scherl)

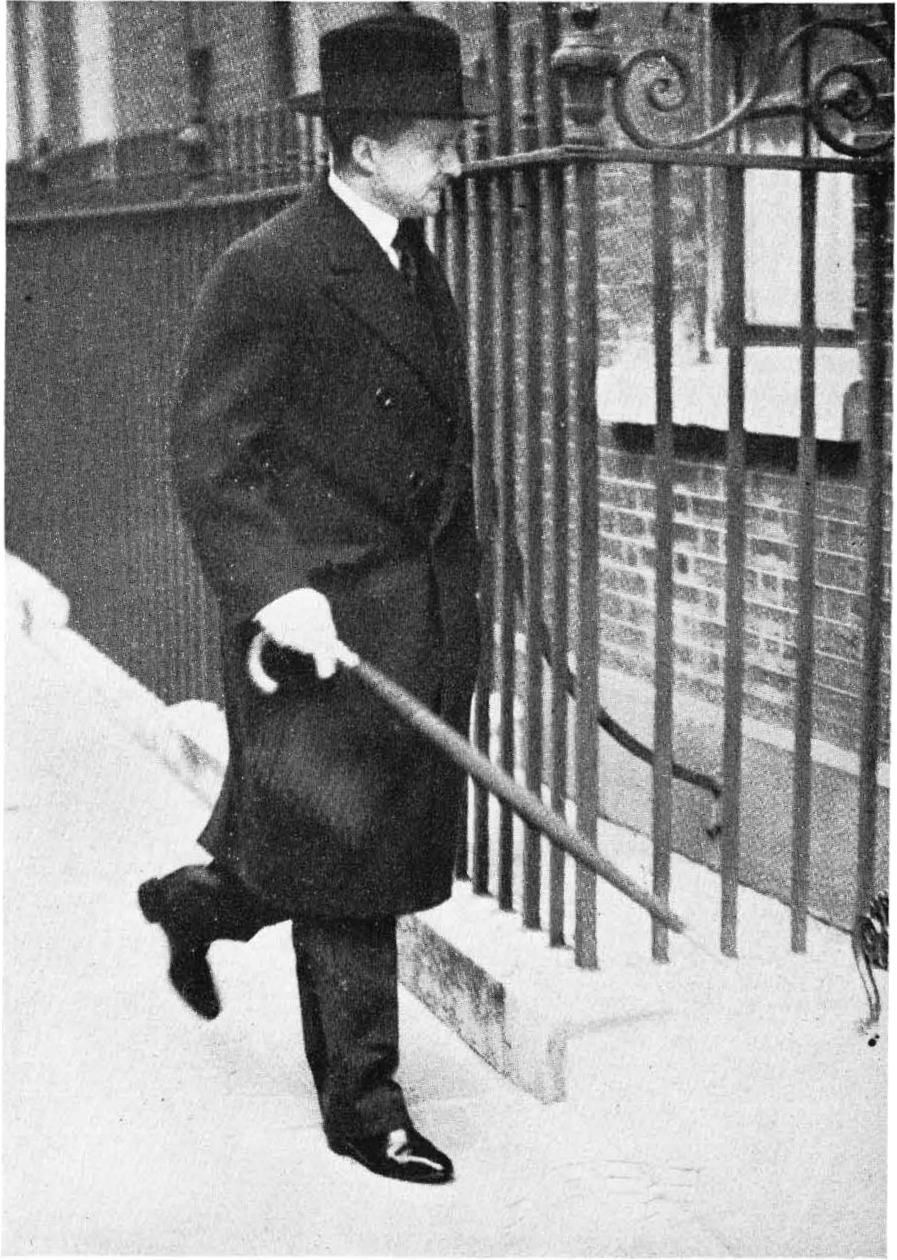
EDOUARD DALADIER

The former French Premier delivering his radio address of August 25, 1939. In May, 1940, Daladier gave way to Reynaud and became Minister of War. In June, after the German victory in Flanders, he was dropped from the cabinet.



WINSTON CHURCHILL

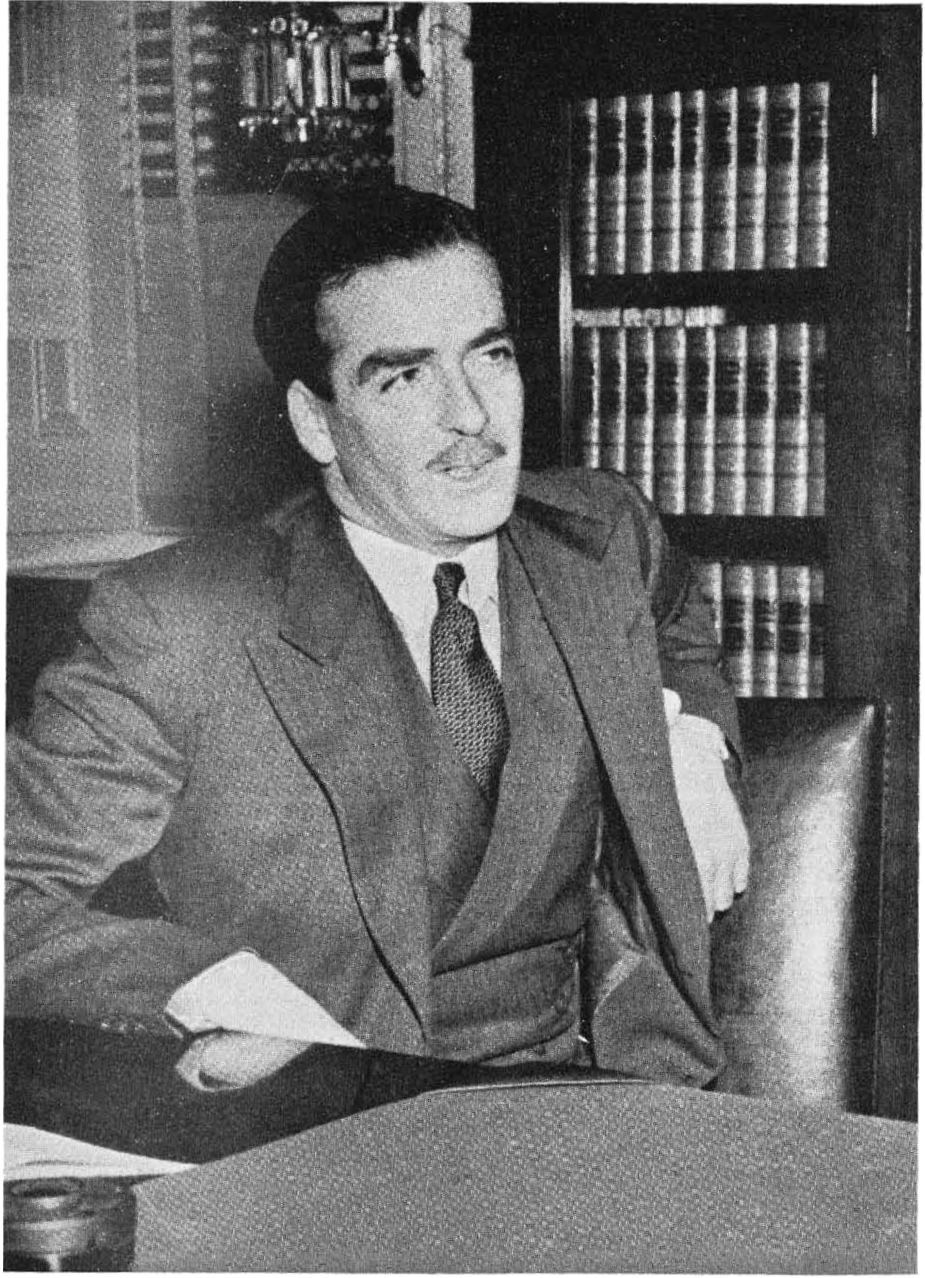
For many years, Churchill, whose name will be associated for all times with the British disasters in Gallipoli and Flanders, has been Britain's chief advocate of war against Germany. He finally realized his ambition of becoming a wartime Prime Minister early in May, 1940, when he superseded Neville Chamberlain.



Wide World

DUFF COOPER

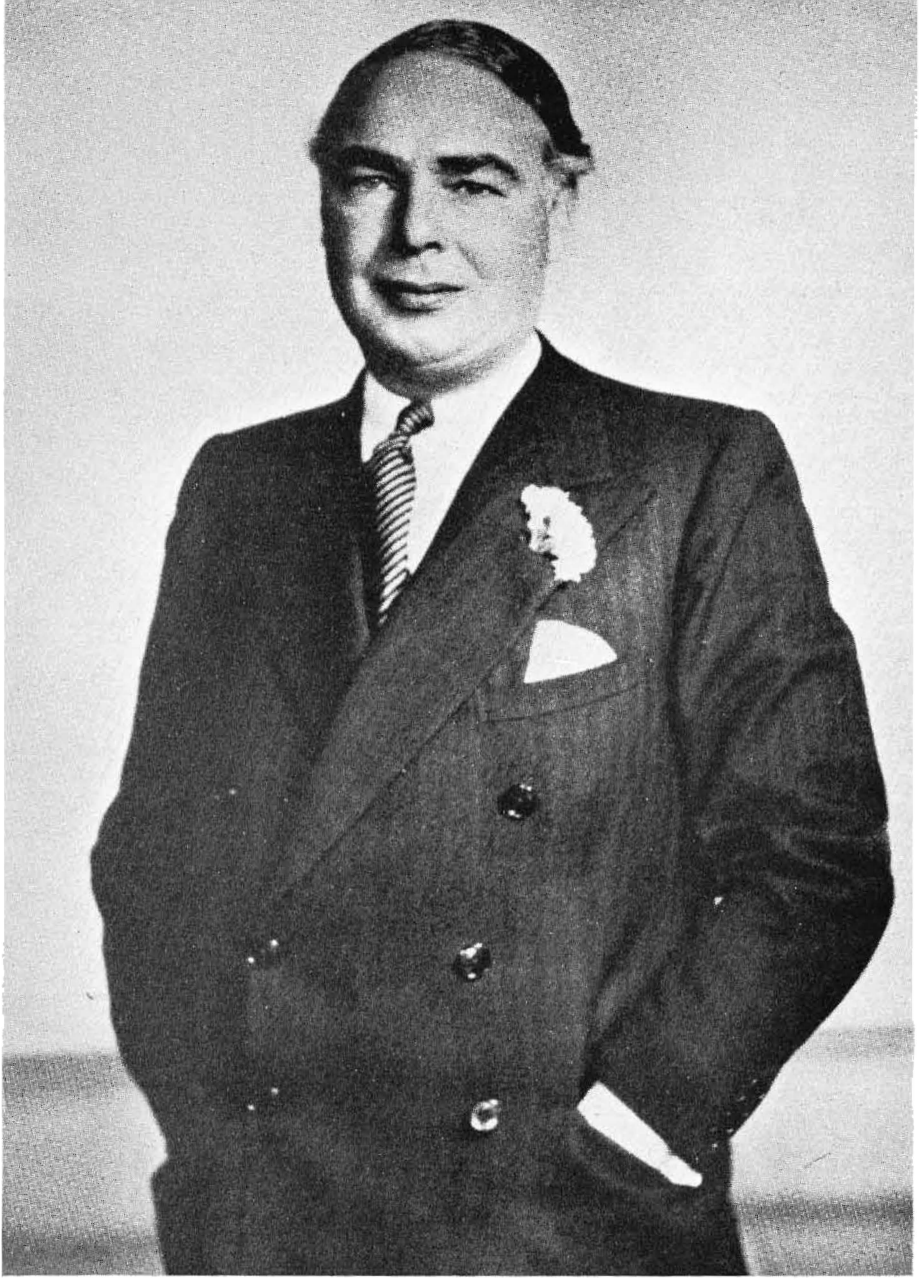
The present British Minister of Information is probably best known for his violent anti-German feelings. He let the cat of British Propaganda out of the bag by threatening "the complete annihilation of the German people."



(Wide World)

ANTHONY EDEN

The present British Minister of War as he appeared in Washington, D. C., in December, 1938. At one time handsome Mr. Eden, who is Britain's best dresser but not its most competent statesman, held the foreign portfolio.



Wide World

LESLIE HORE-BELISHA

The British Minister of War who suddenly "resigned" his post in the Chamberlain War Cabinet after a long feud with Conservative military leaders.

A. P. Bea...

COLONEL BECK ARRIVES IN LONDON

Lord Halifax, British Foreign Minister, greets the Polish Foreign Minister upon the latter's arrival in April, 1939.

(A. P., Berlin)

SIR HOWARD KENNARD

The British Ambassador at the Polish capital until the outbreak of hostilities in September, 1939.

(Presse Bild-Zentrale)

Baron Ernst von Weizsaecker, Head of the Political Department of the German Foreign Ministry.

Dr. Hubert von Dirksen, German Ambassador to London.

(Photo from European)

Hans-Adolf von Moltke, German Ambassador to Warsaw.

WHERE THE FUEHRER MAPS OUT HIS PLANS

Adolf Hitler's room in the Berlin Chancellory.

JÓZEF LIPSKI

The last Polish Ambassador to the German capital.

(Photo from European)

ROBERT COULONDRE

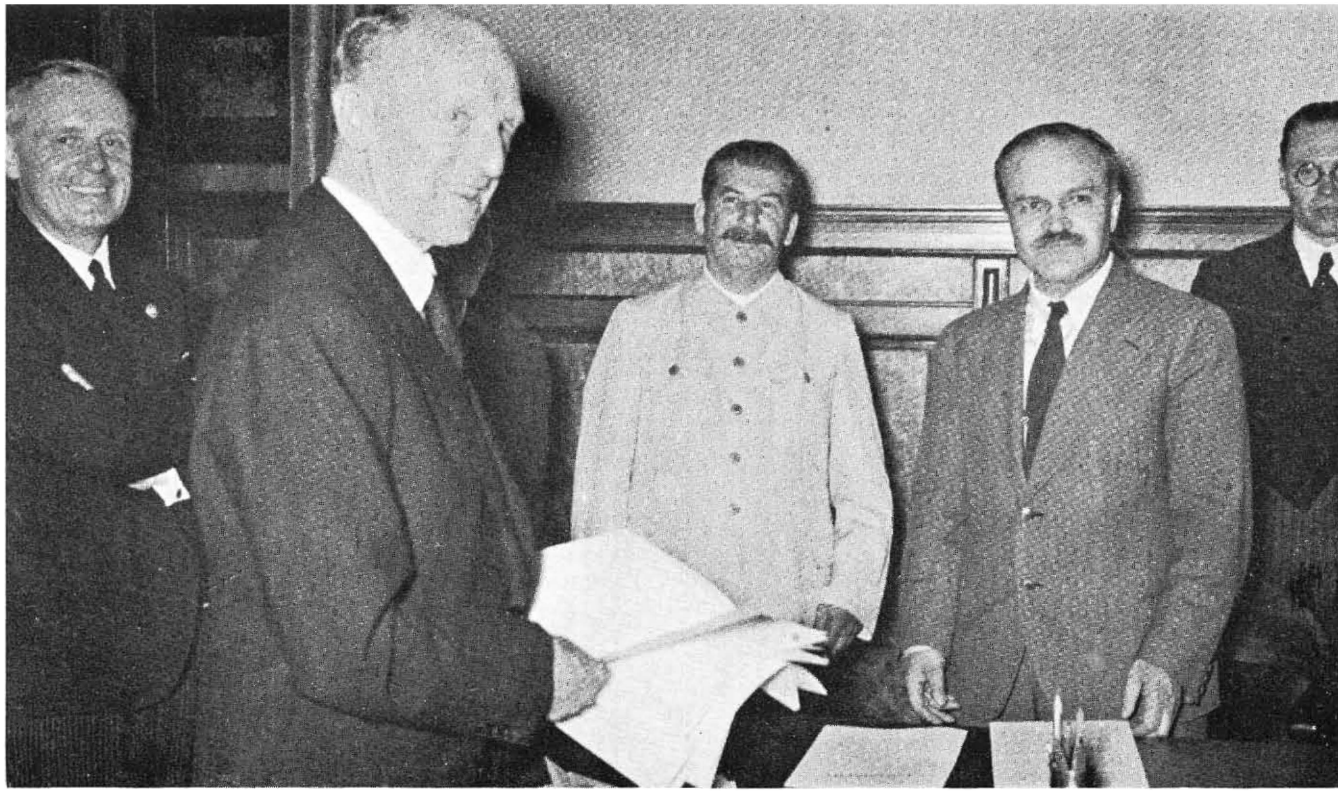
The last French Ambassador to Berlin.

SIR NEVILE HENDERSON

The last British Ambassador to Berlin is shown with the official German interpreter, Dr. Schmidt, shortly after his fateful conversation with Chancellor Hitler on August 25, 1939.

VON RIBBENTROP ARRIVES IN MOSCOW

Accompanied by Potemkin and Count von der Schulenberg, German Ambassador to the Soviet Union, the German Foreign Minister leaves the Moscow airport for his historic talk with Josef Stalin.



SIGNING OF THE RUSSO-GERMAN PACT

(From left to right) Von Ribbentrop, Friedrich Wilhelm Gaus, head of the legal department of the German Foreign Office; Josef Stalin, and Viacheslav Molotov, Russian Premier and Foreign Minister.

THE HOUR OF DECISION

Having met with nothing but discouragement, hindrances and treacherous intrigue from the Allied diplomats whenever he sought to settle peacefully the pressing Central European problem, Chancellor Hitler found it his duty to make a momentous decision. Here he is shown delivering that decision to the German Reichstag on September 1, 1939.

"We have for many months been suffering under the torturing problem which the Versailles Treaty - that is, the dictate of Versailles - inflicted upon us, a problem which has ever become more unbearable to us," declared Chancellor Hitler.

"Danzig was and is a German city. The Corridor was and is German. All these territories owe their cultural development only to the German people. Without the German people, the lowest barbarism would reign in all these eastern districts. Danzig was separated from us. The Corridor, with her German districts, was annexed by Poland and, above all, the German minority living there was mistreated in the most fearful fashion. . . .

"During the fifteen years preceding National Socialism's rise to power there was ample opportunity to revise the Versailles Treaty by peaceful means. But the revisions were not made. . . .

"There is one word that I have never learned—capitulation. . . . Once a Prussian King with a ridiculously small state was confronted by one of the greatest coalitions of all times. Yet, after three wars, he succeeded in preserving his nation's integrity, because he had the strong and faithful heart that we need at this time. I, therefore, assure the entire world that November, 1918, will never be repeated in German history. . . . *It is wholly unimportant whether or not we live, but it is essential that Germany shall live.*"

(Hoffmann, Berlin)

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

The following documents have been published with the object of giving a clear picture of the events which led up to the outbreak of the present war. Besides relating the history of the weeks immediately preceding the outbreak of hostilities, they allow the reader to form an independent opinion about the more remote causes of the war. The documents trace the development of German-Polish relations from Versailles to the rejection by Poland of the German proposal for an amicable settlement of the Danzig and Polish Corridor problem. The events from 1933 to the present time are amply illustrated, while the situation of the German minority in Poland and the Polish activities in Danzig during the preceding years are called to mind by a number of particular examples. The documents then show the trend of Britain's bellicose policy after the Munich Agreement. There follows an account of German efforts to ensure peaceful relations with her neighbors. This forms the basis necessary for the comprehension of the final phase, in which British policy leads to open conflict.

Chapter I

DEVELOPMENT OF GERMAN-POLISH RELATIONS

A. The Polish Fight Against German Culture in Poland and Against Danzig from 1919 to 1933

1. The Position of the German Minority in Poland

Since the day at Versailles when Poland was reconstituted an independent state, German-Polish relations have in many ways been doomed to failure. In the first place, Poland declared herself, by virtue of her alleged thousand-year-old mission, Ger-

many's hereditary enemy. On this mission she based not only her claims to German territory, but her very excuse for being, and thus recommended herself to the victorious Powers as a potential and reliable ally who could be called upon at any time to assist in holding Germany in check. Secondly, this function on the part of Poland was confirmed by the Western Powers. She was included in the French alliance-system and commissioned to take charge of the permanent encirclement on the eastern sector, thus carrying on the tradition that Germany's attention should be divided between two fronts. Thirdly, German-Polish relations were envenomed from the outset by the transfer to Polish rule of a large body of Germans who were forthwith subjected to strict Polonization. Fourthly the cession of German territory in the east was one of the greatest injustices of the Peace Treaty. Not only the German nation but competent Allied statesmen regarded these cessions as intolerable. They agreed that this must be the first point of readjustment, if it were not to be the cause of the next European war.

In a memorandum addressed to the Versailles Conference on March 25, 1919 (Document No. 1), Mr. Lloyd George drew attention to this potential cause of future conflict, as did also the German Peace Delegation (No. 2). Even M. Clemenceau, President of the Supreme Council, in his well-known letter to M. Paderewski dated June 24, 1919, (No. 3) pointed out to the Poles the obligations implied by the handing over of large groups of minorities, and made the signing and observance of a Treaty for the Protection of Minorities (No. 4) the condition on which Poland was to receive the German territories. This entailed a solemn obligation on the part of the Allied Powers to secure the observance by Poland of this charter concerning the German and other minorities in Poland. The wording of the treaty leaves no room for doubt as to what responsibilities Poland assumed with regard to the non-Polish inhabitants of the new state, who represented over 40% of the total population. Yet the archives here presented show that the history of German-Polish relations between 1919 and 1933 has become a story of continual infringement of this treaty by the Poles and

at the same time a story of the silent complicity of the League of Nations and the guarantor Powers. As far back as November, 1920, the German Government were forced to cast aside their reserve and send a comprehensive complaint to the Polish Government (No. 5). It was stated therein that "the German in Poland was an outlaw." The speech made by the German-National Delegate Spickermann in the Polish Parliament on January 23, 1923, (No. 6) bears out the impression that the Treaty for the Protection of Minorities, "the Magna Carta of our very existence," was broken from the day on which it was signed. A few months later, General Sikorski, who was then Premier, speaking in public, announced the government's program as "the liquidation of German estates and the de-Germanization of the western provinces" and proceeded to indulge in cutting remarks directed against Danzig (No. 7). By the middle of 1923 the expulsion of the Germans had already assumed extraordinary proportions (No. 8). Polish measures against German landowners, such as the Permanent Court of International Justice in its advisory opinion of September 10, 1923 designated as "not in conformity with the international obligations of the Polish Government" (No. 9), made emigration virtually compulsory. In September 1931 it was admitted by Polish authorities that some million Germans had already been ousted from Poland (No. 10). Neither the guarantor Powers nor the League of Nations, to which not only the German but also the Ukrainian minority had meantime made repeated appeals for protection against the continued infringement of the provisions of the minorities treaty by Poland (No. 9 Note), fulfilled their obligations. A debate which took place in the House of Lords on June 15, 1932 (No. 11)—one of many such debates held in the British Parliament—proves that people in Britain were aware of the ill-treatment of the minorities in Poland and the consequent menace to the peace of Europe, but that nothing was done to alter conditions while yet there was time. By March 1933 Poland's war of extermination directed against the very foundations of the economic existence and the cultural institutions of the German minority had already assumed alarming proportions (No. 12).

The Polonizing policy was likewise immediately directed against the Free City of Danzig. The German Peace Delegation had jointly protested, on the basis of President Wilson's declarations, against the severance of Danzig from the Reich (No. 13). From the outset Poland regarded the new status in Danzig merely as a preparatory condition for making the city definitely Polish (No. 14). She set up twenty-four bureaus in Danzig, and saw in each one a Polish nucleus and point of further growth. A report by the Supreme Command of the Army at the conclusion of the war with Poland (see p. 278) shows that the more important of these controls had been developed into military supports. The Free City of Danzig was constantly forced to appeal to the League Commissioner and to the Council of the League of Nations against action on the part of Poland. Abusing her postal and railway privileges, (Nos. 15 and 16) encouraging chauvinistic Polish students' societies and military organizations (Nos. 17 and 18) and, principally, by the exercise of excessive economic pressure (No. 19) Poland continued her unremitting efforts to force Danzig to submit to Polish interests. Autocratic interference on the part of Poland with the sovereign rights of Danzig affected every political and economic sphere of the Free City (No. 20). The most dangerous aspect of the Polish advance was the erection of fortifications on the Westerplatte, which had always been regarded by the Poles as a military base and was accordingly fortified as such (No. 21). The reinforcement of the Polish garrison on the Westerplatte (Nos. 21 and 22), and the unreported stay of a Polish ammunition transport vessel in the Westerplatte munitions dock (No. 23) in March 1933 constituted such an unequivocal violation of the law on the part of Poland that, even among the diplomats in Warsaw, there was hardly one who would have refrained from a sharp criticism of the Polish action (No. 24). While Poland endeavored by every means in her power to extend her position in Danzig, she succeeded in damaging seriously the trade of the port of Danzig by the construction of a rival Polish harbor at Gdynia, and by discriminating in its favor (No. 25).

B. Germany's Efforts to Come to an Understanding With Poland, 1933 to 1939

I. Negotiations Relating to a German-Polish Agreement (May, 1933 to January, 1934)

In the interest of neighborly as well as European peace, the Fuehrer decided immediately upon his accession to power to place Germany's relations with Poland upon an entirely new footing, and, with this end in view, to effect an understanding with Poland. Germany's efforts to reach an understanding began in May 1933 and continued until 1939. On May 17, 1933, the Fuehrer publicly uttered in the Reichstag the first suggestion that a solution would have to be reached on the problem of Germany's eastern frontier (No. 29). He had already emphasized this necessity very clearly in his conversation with the Polish Minister on May 2 (No. 26). The policy of rapprochement was first introduced by means of negotiations to end the customs war (Nos. 30 and 31). After the Fuehrer had, in October 1933, once again publicly expressed his readiness to come to an understanding, a meeting took place on November 15, 1933 between him and M. Lipski, the Polish Minister. At this meeting a decision taken by the Fuehrer and Marshal Pilsudski was confirmed on behalf of both states, namely, "to refrain from any resort to force in their mutual relations" (No. 32). Immediately afterwards, the Fuehrer charged the German Minister in Warsaw to propose to Marshal Pilsudski personally the adoption of a written agreement, and to submit to him a draft thereof (No. 33). It was, however, obvious from the outset that for Germany the proposed agreement "in no wise implies the recognition of Germany's existing eastern frontiers", but that by the suggested declaration, "a basis for the solution of all problems, including therefore also the territorial issues, was to be created" (No. 33). Thus Germany has always regarded the 1934 agreement as an amicable basis on which, in the interests of undisturbed relations between the two nations, a peaceful solution of even territorial problems might be reached. Marshal Pilsudski immediately expressed himself in favor of the German proposal for a written agreement. It is true that

his skepticism concerning the possibility of a really fundamental alteration in the relationship between Germany and Poland may be seen in his remark that "the millennial antagonism of the Polish people against Germans would give rise to grave difficulties" (No. 34). Whereas the German view was that the proposed agreement should pave the way for the gradual settlement of all those questions which hindered the development of friendly relations between Germany and Poland, the leading Polish delegates immediately made a significant attempt to exclude the problems relating to the German minority from the agreement (Nos. 35 and 36). On January 26, 1934 the document was signed and published (No. 37). The German nation was honestly ready to bury the past. Only the Fuehrer himself possessed the necessary authority not only to make the German people forget old scores, but to render public opinion positively favorable towards Poland. Naturally, Germany expected that henceforward the position of the German minority in Poland would be radically improved.

II. The Situation of the German Minority not Improved by the German-Polish Policy of Rapprochement

(November, 1933 to August, 1934)

This expectation met with disappointment. Only a few days after the historic meeting between the Fuehrer and M. Lipski, the Polish Minister, a report was received from the consulate at Thorn stating that as a result of serious outrages against Germans in Graudenz, more than twelve persons had been injured and one killed (Nos. 39 and 40). Towards the close of the year 1933, the President of the Mixed Commission for Upper Silesia, the Swiss citizen, Mr. Calonder, in view of the treatment of the German minority in Polish Upper Silesia was forced to state that, "much to his regret, the policy of rapprochement had as yet brought no improvement", whereas in the German section of his district there was practically no cause for complaint (No. 41). The signing of the agreement was also marked by anti-German demonstrations (Nos. 42 to 47). By the middle of

1934 the German diplomatic and consular representatives in Poland had arrived at the conclusion that there had been no change for the better, but on the contrary the situation of the German minority had become noticeably worse.

III. Poland Evades the Supervision of Minorities by the League of Nations

(September to November 1934)

We know today that Poland regarded the agreement with Germany as a welcome means of finally ridding herself of the German minority by underhand methods within the space of ten years, for she assumed that Germany and the German press would remain silent in accordance with the spirit of the friendly agreement (cf. also Nos. 54 and 145). The unwelcome supervision undertaken by the League of Nations concerning the application of the Treaty for the Protection of Minorities had to be eliminated, too. On September 13, 1934 Poland notified the Assembly of the League of Nations that she would cease to co-operate with the League in the execution of the Treaty for the Protection of Minorities (Nos. 48 and 49). Practically speaking, Poland's action amounted to a cancellation of the Treaty. Britain and France, as guarantor Powers, contented themselves with a formal admonition in the League Assembly, although they must have been well aware of the seriousness and far-reaching effects of Poland's action. In German quarters, the Polish move could be received only with specific reservations, since the obligations imposed upon Poland for the protection of the minorities represented "the counter-part of the exceedingly unfavorable frontier line drawn by the Paris Peace Conference" (Nos. 50 and 51). The German Foreign Minister therefore requested the German Ambassador in Warsaw expressly to inform the Polish Government that Germany could not be expected to renounce her interest in the welfare of the German minority, especially since the rights of the minorities formed an integral part of the entire settlement made in 1919 (No. 52). The Polish Foreign Minister thereupon expressly declared that

the rights of the minorities would continue to be protected by the Polish constitution, and that he was prepared to investigate any complaints which Germany might put forward (No. 53).

IV. Further Aggravation in the Position of the German Minority

(November, 1934 to October, 1937)

Despite these Polish assurances the situation remained unchanged. While the German press remained silent in order to "preserve peace with our neighbor," the Polish authorities deliberately continued their underhand work of extermination. The reports from the German Embassy, consul-generals and consuls in Poland (Nos. 54 to 80) during the period from November 1934 to October 1937 are filled with news of further action against the German minority. In every walk of life the roll of German losses grows steadily. Agrarian reform, dismissal of workers, damage to German property, personal assault and terrorism, the baiting methods of the ill-famed "West Marches Society" increases in scope and intensity, and the Polonization of the heavy industries, of land ownership and the labor market is supplemented by a well-organized boycotting system. The first rumors appear of further territorial claims against Germany. German protests to the Polish Government are occasionally answered with promises but usually with evasions, and the German-Polish press truce (No. 62) is abused. During this period, too, the German diplomatic and consular authorities in Poland are forced to report that far from there being any signs of an understanding, the situation is becoming steadily worse.

V. Negotiations Relating to a German-Polish Minorities Declaration

(January to November, 1937)

In the spring of 1937 Germany, in view of the impending expiration of the Geneva agreement relating to Upper Silesia,

renewed her efforts to secure, by means of amicable negotiations, a bilateral treaty for the protection of minorities, voluntarily signed by the contracting parties. Even after the Geneva Convention had expired, Poland was bound by the provisions for the protection of minorities of June 28, 1919 (No. 82). The German Ambassador in Warsaw, however, realized at the first sounding that Poland was determined not to sign a bilateral treaty for the protection of minorities (No. 83). Upon his second attempt, too, she remained negative (No. 84). M. Beck was of the opinion that a treaty of this sort would infringe Polish sovereignty. Negotiations relating to questions arising from the expiration of the Geneva Convention became fraught with difficulties as soon as the problems relating to the minorities were broached (Nos. 85, 86 and 92). At the beginning of June 1937 Germany undertook a further step in Warsaw to obtain an agreement concerning the minorities (Nos. 87, 88, 89). In this connection it was again made perfectly clear that "Poland, as an integral part of the total settlement effected in 1919, had assumed unilateral obligations with regard to the minorities", and the intolerable position of the German national group was discussed in detail. For the sake of maintaining peaceful relations with her neighbor, Germany was prepared to content herself with simultaneous public declarations consistent in purport, made by the respective governments in place of a bilateral agreement (No. 88). While these negotiations were still going on, there came news of fresh Polish laws, passed on the day following the expiration of the Geneva Convention with the object of a *fait accompli* in Upper Silesia and forming a basis for further liquidation of the German minority (Nos. 93, 94). In spite of this, it was eventually possible to come to terms with regard to the text of the minorities declaration, and the date of publication was fixed (No. 95). Just then—on the day preceding the intended publication—a new school-law, extremely unfavorable to the minorities, was passed in East Upper Silesia, with the result that there could be no thought of publishing the minorities declaration at this moment (Nos. 96, 97). Fresh negotiations were necessary in order to counteract the repercussions of this sabotage action on the part of

Grazynski, the Upper Silesian Voivode (Nos. 98, 99). On November 5, 1937, however, the minorities declaration by both governments was finally made public (No. 101). The Fuehrer received representatives of the Polish minority. His cordial remarks (No. 102) met with another frigid reception on the part of the Polish President (No. 103). Nevertheless, M. Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, expressed the earnest desire of the Polish Government to make the minorities declaration the starting-point for a move to improve the situation (No. 100). What Germany expected from Poland after this new attempt to reach an understanding was stated in an *aide-mémoire* handed to the Polish Ambassador (No. 104).

VI. Poland's Failure to Comply With the German-Polish Minorities Declaration

(November, 1937 to November, 1938)

Once again, disappointment followed hard on the heels of hope. As early as November 22, 1937, the Consul-General in Kattowitz reported a new wave of threats and dismissals (No. 105). Anti-German demonstrations were reported from Cracow (No. 106). On December 11, the German Ambassador was forced to point out to the Polish Foreign Minister that the situation in Upper Silesia had remained unchanged, that the struggle against the Protestant church had become more intense and that the activities of the "West Marches Society" continued, so that a certain feeling of disappointment already prevailed in Berlin (No. 109). On January 25, 1938, a breach of the gentlemen's agreement concerning school matters was established (No. 111), and on February 8 doubts were entertained with regard to the value of Polish promises (No. 112). In March 1938, the German Senator Wiesner stated in Parliament that from 60 to 80% of the German adult workers in Upper Silesia were unemployed and that there was no work at all for German juveniles (No. 113). Nor was there any improvement in the educational field (No. 114). The "West Marches Society", the press and other organizations influencing public opinion in Poland ignored not only the minorities decla-

ration, but also the German-Polish peace. Continual declarations, demonstrations, anti-German newspaper articles and speeches (Nos. 116, 117) proved that the Polish people had no intention of any moral disarmament in regard to Germany.

VII. German-Polish Exchange of Notes Regarding the Olsa Territory and the Polish Action Against the German Minority in That Territory

(October, 1938 to March, 1939)

Germany experienced similar disappointment in the Olsa Territory. This region was allotted to Poland by an act of German friendship during the Czechoslovakian dispute. Immediately after occupying the Olsa Territory, Poland showed her gratitude by terrorizing the German section of the population, as well as the Czechs (No. 118). A German protest led to the extension of the minorities declaration to include the Olsa Territory (No. 119). In spite of this, the supplanting of Germans and other anti-German measures continued in every walk of life; the number of fugitives ran into thousands (Nos. 120 and 121). Renewed remonstrances were made in vain (Nos. 122, 125). The list of German losses in employment, schools, ownership of land and cultural institutions grew rapidly. The German Consul in Teschen reported "mass action on a large scale against all German and Czech workers and employees" (No. 126).

VIII. Increased Stringency of Polish Activities Against the German Community

(October, 1938 to March, 1939)

After the transfer of the Olsa territory to Poland, the pressure exerted by the Poles in other German districts increased from month to month. Their success in obtaining the Olsa territory made them overbearing (No. 128) and whetted their appetite for further territorial expansion, this time at Germany's expense. Polish associations and newspapers began to demand annexation (Nos. 129, 130), the dismissal of workers

and employees in Upper Silesia continued apace (Nos. 131, 134) and books such as Goethe's "Dichtung and Wahrheit" were banned in German schools (No. 133). In January 1939 there were arrests, instances of expropriation occurred and boycotting continued (Nos. 137, 138 and 140). A feeling of despair took possession of the German population (No. 142). Herr von Ribbentrop, the German Foreign Minister, paid a visit to Warsaw, but his renewed efforts to reach a German-Polish understanding proved vain. The Polish Government let matters slide. Due to this the wave of anti-German activity reached its first climax on February 24 and 25, 1939 with insulting demonstrations outside the German Embassy (Nos. 146, 147) and incidents in Posen (Nos. 148, 150), Cracow (No. 149), and other towns. The cry to conquer Danzig and other German territory became more insistent (No. 151). Germany sent a warning to Warsaw (No. 152), pointing out the responsibility which Poland was taking upon herself. German Ambassador von Moltke was obliged to state that the basis for German-Polish rapprochement was steadily dwindling (No. 155).

IX. Continued Expropriation of German Landed Property Regardless of the Minorities Declaration

(February, 1938 to February, 1939)

A special factor in Poland's fight against Germanism was the expropriation of German land-holdings (Nos. 156 to 168). In spite of the agreement of 1934 and the minorities declaration of 1937, dispossessions continually increased, under the pretext of agrarian reform, which brought economic hardship to the whole national group and caused a fresh wave of emigration. In view of the trifling amounts paid as compensation (No. 159), expropriation was in reality disguised robbery. In spite of German intervention, the absolute and relative loss of German landed property grew with every new list of land to be expropriated. In November 1938 still another attempt was made to stop discriminative treatment of the German minority at least for the future (No. 161). Assurances were given (No. 162), but German land-owners were more heavily hit by

the new list of expropriations published in February 1939 than they had been in the previous year (Nos. 163 and 164).

X. Further Efforts on the Part of Germany to Improve the Position of the German Minority by Means of German-Polish Discussions (November, 1937 to March, 1939)

Despite all this, Germany made further efforts to improve the position of her nationals in Poland by means of negotiation. As early as November 1937 she suggested holding periodic discussions between representatives of both states on the subject of minority problems (No. 169). No response to the suggestion was forthcoming from Poland. In May 1938 the proposal was repeated (No. 170). On July 9, upon instructions given by the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs (No. 171), a third attempt was made to win Poland's assent to regular discussions of the minorities question in the spirit of the 1937 declarations (No. 172). By her dilatory attitude (Nos. 173, 174) Poland succeeded in postponing the discussions proposed in November 1937, and it was not until the German Foreign Minister visited Warsaw on January 26, 1939 that the date of the first meeting was finally accepted (No. 202). This meeting actually began on February 27 (No. 175) but was conducted in such a negative spirit by Poland (No. 176) that at its conclusion on March 4, the German delegates were forced to conclude: "The Poles have no intention of altering their policy with regard to the German minority. They may be prepared to make slight concessions on less important issues, but in all vital questions concerning the existence of the German community, they are determined to pursue vigorously their present policy of de-Germanization" (No. 178). This sabotage of Germany's untiring efforts closes the long and disappointing chapter of her conciliatory negotiations.

XI. The Situation in Danzig (1933 to 1939)

Danzig, too had taken part in the policy of German-Polish rapprochement. By means of direct discussion and the settle-

ment of existing difficulties Danzig likewise hoped to contribute to the fundamental improvement of German-Polish relations. On August 5, 1933, at the initiative of Danzig, agreements were reached on several points which were intended to settle controversial questions of many years' standing (No. 179). Nevertheless the attempts at Polonization continued (No. 180). On August 6, 1934, agreements were signed regarding economic and customs questions (No. 181). In spite of this, Poland did not renounce her ambition to expand. To this end seventeen Polish societies and leagues in Danzig were militarized (No. 182) and railway employes of German extraction dismissed *en masse* (No. 183, 184 and 186). At the end of July 1935, a Polish attempt against the whole foundation of economic life in the port of Danzig through an illegal customs decree led to serious conflict (No. 185). In July 1936 violent anti-Danzig demonstrations, in which some pro-government societies took part, were held in Warsaw. Bills posted on walls demanded that Poland should have "equal domestic rights" in the German city of Danzig (No. 187). In Danzig itself the Reich and its emblems of sovereignty were insulted by members of the Polish colony (No. 190). In August 1938 a wave of anti-German propaganda swept all through Poland. Danzig was one of the agitators' main themes. The general attitude was one of inimical agitation and demands for annexation (No. 193). The President of the Senate lodged a protest with the Polish representative in Danzig who, for his part, had encouraged the Poles at a Polish demonstration on Danzig territory, to live in hope "that they would shortly reside in Danzig on Polish ground" (No. 192). The struggle against Danzig went on in every walk of life and particularly in economic spheres (No. 191). Again and again the annexation of the city was demanded or heralded by Poland (Nos. 194 and 195). Disputes between German and Polish students were regarded in Warsaw as sufficient motive "for taking military action against Danzig" (No. 196).

XII. Germany's Efforts to Secure an Amicable Settlement of the Problems of Danzig and the Polish Corridor

(October, 1938 to May, 1939)

Part twelve of Section B, Chapter 1, contains in documents 197 to 216 *the most important proof of the sincerity and moderation with which Germany, in spite of all set-backs, strove to reach a final settlement, honorable to both parties, of the fundamental German-Polish problem, namely the question of Danzig and the Corridor.* That both problems had to be solved was evident from the general tension in German-Polish relations and in the nationalities problem. It is of decisive importance that Germany sought to reach a settlement *not in defiance of, but in co-operation with Poland* on the basis of the 1934 agreement, and reduced her demands to a minimum. On October 24, 1938 Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop, at a meeting with the Polish Ambassador, for the first time set forth the German proposals, their significance and their scope (No. 197). They have never been substantially altered. In exchange for the return of Danzig to the Reich, and for an extra-territorial motor-road and rail connection through the Corridor—which would correspond to a similar Polish connection passing through Danzig territory—Germany offered Poland the ultimate recognition and guarantee of her frontiers, i. e. renunciation of any German claim to the other ceded territories. The time was well chosen: Poland had, with Germany's assistance, acquired the Olsa Territory and was engaged in establishing a common frontier with Hungary. Ambassador Lipski was seeking the support of Germany in this enterprise. On November 19, 1938 Lipski submitted a reply which partly deferred and partly evaded the issue (No. 198), the reason given for this being internal political difficulties. Neither this reply, which caused the German Foreign Minister to explain once more the German proposals, nor the conversation which took place on December 14 (No. 199) between M. Beck and the German Ambassador gave the impression that Poland felt that she was being threatened in any way. The third conversation on this subject took place between the Fuehrer and Foreign Minister Beck, on Jan-

uary 5, 1939 (No. 200). The Fuehrer described the broad, amicable basis on which he conceived the future settlement of German-Polish relations and the solution of the problem of Danzig and the Corridor. Poland stood to gain by this solution, which excluded any possibility of threat. Again M. Beck was evasive, but said he was prepared to "consider the problem at more leisure." On the following day the same subject was discussed in detail for the fourth time at a meeting between M. Beck and the German Minister for Foreign Affairs (No. 201). It was debated for the fifth time at a conversation in Warsaw, on the occasion of the German Foreign Minister's visit on January 26, 1939 (No. 202). Again M. Beck promised to go into the question carefully. In the interval which elapsed between the Warsaw talk and the sixth discussion on March 21, 1939 (No. 203), Czechoslovakia collapsed, giving Poland her desired common frontier with Hungary and removed all danger of an "Ukrainian Piemont". The German Minister for Foreign Affairs was able at once to allay Poland's new anxiety over Slovakia by proposing that Poland should participate in guaranteeing the Slovak state, provided German-Polish relations developed satisfactorily. Although Germany had every reason to feel suspicious in view of renewed anti-German demonstrations, bitter attacks in the press and the introduction of new measures against the German minority, the German Foreign Minister merely put forward the previous moderate demands and expressed the wish that they should be met amicably as a part of a permanent settlement of German-Polish relations. At the same time, he sent word to the Polish Foreign Minister that he would be pleased to receive a visit from M. Beck shortly in Berlin. Poland had for half a year been informed of Germany's wishes. She had therefore no cause for either surprise or alarm on March 21.

Poland's first reply was partial mobilization on March 23 and concentration of troops in the vicinity of Danzig (No. 204, 205 and 207). The influence of the army in foreign policy grew steadily. Britain already had a finger in the pie (No. 206). Poland could rest assured that she would play a decisive part in Britain's policy of encirclement which took overt form on

March 17, and that she could name her own price, as the second chapter minutely demonstrates. Poland's second reply, a definite "No," of March 26, 1939 (No. 208 Appendix), therefore gave the impression that she was backed by Britain. Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop was obliged to state that the Polish Government's Memorandum offered no possible basis for a settlement of the German-Polish question. The Polish Ambassador issued a warning that the further pursuance of these plans, especially with regard to Danzig, would mean war. In spite of the seriousness of the situation, the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs did not lose patience on receiving the Polish challenge but urged the Polish Government for the seventh time to weigh the German proposals again when the situation became less tense (No. 208). Poland's third reply took the form of anti-German excesses in Bromberg, the letting loose of the Polish press (No. 209) and the fostering of a general pro-war atmosphere to prepare the Polish people for war. A report from the German Ambassador dated March 28, 1939 already states that the attitude in Warsaw was one of "self-assurance and self-conceit" which "was dangerous in view of the Polish national character." The Polish vice-minister for War himself spread the idea of Poland's military superiority over Germany (No. 210). Foreign Minister Beck gradually became the prisoner of Polish chauvinism, to which he sacrificed his own policy (No. 216). He considered it expedient on March 29, to threaten the German Ambassador with the *casus belli* should Germany or the Danzig Senate venture to alter the status of Danzig (No. 211). Instead of going to Berlin, he went to London to accept the British guarantee. This was the final episode in the long history of Germany's patient efforts to reach a German-Polish understanding. Poland had exercised her option in favor of the policy of encirclement. Thus she had openly reverted to her 1919 policy of hereditary enmity, which she had never abandoned in spirit. She had annulled the agreement of 1934 by which neither of these states should resort to the use of force against the other, and had pledged herself to take up arms against Germany even if Polish interests were in no way involved (No. 213). In his speech in the Reichstag on April 28 (No. 214) and in the German Government's Memoran-

dum of the same day (No. 213), the Fuehrer wrote "finis" to six years of honest, patient endeavor to secure the friendship of Poland. However, even in this serious moment he made one more offer of peace and declared himself prepared, in the name of Germany, to discuss a new treaty. Poland did not make use of this opportunity but chose to reply with a haughty speech from M. Beck on May 5, with intensified anti-German agitation and an unending stream of speeches and newspaper articles demanding for Poland more territory inhabited by Germans and even Reich territory. It was admitted in competent Polish circles that M. Beck had become the prisoner not only of Polish chauvinism but also of the British endeavors (No. 216).

Chapter 2

BRITISH WAR POLICY

A. British Re-armament and Anti-German Propaganda

(September, 1938 to July, 1939)

Owing to twenty years' neglect and Poland's overbearing attitude, the problem of German-Polish relations had become the most critical question in European politics. For those powers who sought a pretext for war, it offered the desired opportunity at any moment. Britain, in pursuance of her encirclement policy, had been scanning the European horizon in search of just such an opportunity. Finally, during the fateful days of March 1939, she established contact with chauvinistic Poland. Anglo-German relations appeared to have taken a turn for the better at the time of the Munich Declaration (No. 217). Many years of unreciprocated effort on the part of Germany to secure the friendship of Britain had preceded this event. Friendly relations with Britain formed part of the National Socialist foreign political program. The Naval Pact of 1935 was intended to ensure that these two Powers would mutually respect each other's interests and never again cross swords. The Munich Declaration ought finally to have guaranteed peaceful relations between Britain

and Germany. How great was then the general disappointment when, three days after the Munich Declaration, Mr. Chamberlain told the House of Commons that Britain should proceed to re-arm at all costs (No. 218). This fact and the attitude of the Opposition in Britain forced the Fuehrer in his speech at Saarbruecken (No. 219) to warn his people against over-optimism and to point out to them the possibility that at any time the pro-war party of Messrs. Eden, Churchill and Duff Cooper might come into power. Future developments proved him right. Long before the Czechoslovak crisis, Germany had been reviled in Britain to make the British public ready to re-arm. After Munich this policy was vigorously advanced. As early as October 10, 1938, the British Secretary of State for War announced that the Territorial Army was to be considerably strengthened and modernized (No. 220). At the same time Britain urged her ally, France, to increase her armaments, especially the air force (No. 221). This was followed by preparations for the drawing up of a national register for voluntary national and military service (No. 222). In a broadcast speech to the United States (No. 223), Mr. Churchill was permitted to give vent to anti-German sentiments, as did also Mr. Duff Cooper in Paris (No. 232), and demand universal conscription. In a speech which he made in Weimar on November 6 (No. 224), the Fuehrer renewed his warnings against those circles in Britain whose program consisted of the "annihilation of Germany and Italy." The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs on his part drew the attention of foreign press representatives to the international danger of warmongers in the Western democracies (No. 225). In the middle of November, Canadian industries were successfully incorporated in the British program for re-armament in the air (No. 226). Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax visited Paris. France was urged to increase her offensive air-force, while Britain promised to dispatch a strong expeditionary force to France (Nos. 227 and 228). On November 30, 1938, Britain declared commercial war against Germany in Central and Southeastern Europe (No. 229). On December 7, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies deemed it necessary to de-value the Munich Declaration by an unmotivated "No" to the question of colonies

and mandated territories, preventing Germany from entering upon negotiations in this sphere (No. 231). All this time, the British Government made no effort to suppress anti-German propaganda in the press, insults to the Fuehrer (No. 233), the poisoning of the political atmosphere by means of mendacious reports (No. 230) and the growing influence exerted on public opinion by the British pro-war party, to which Mr. Chamberlain had by this time made open concessions (No. 234). The Fuehrer proved in his address at the New Year's reception on January 12, 1939 (No. 235) that Germany, in spite of disappointments, still would not allow her hopes for peace and understanding with Great Britain and France to be blasted. Britain replied to Germany's goodwill by the introduction of Voluntary National Service intended as "a scheme to make us ready for war" (No. 237) and by redoubled efforts to make the British nation prepared for conflict. The Fuehrer's endeavors for peace were not published in the British press (No. 238). Even before he had the pretext offered by the Czech situation, Mr. Chamberlain felt himself called upon to play the same part toward Adolf Hitler's Germany as Pitt the Younger had played towards Napoleon (No. 240). On January 30, the Fuehrer, addressing the Reichstag, was forced once more to draw their attention to the pro-war party in Britain and to point out to the German people that that clique "wanted to bring about a war by hook or by crook" (No. 241). In Britain re-armament and anti-German propaganda worked hand in hand. The enormous sums spent on re-armament became a boast (No. 242). As early as the middle of February 1939 Britain cleared the decks for commercial war by withdrawing her signature from the Geneva General Act, which would handicap her in time of war (No. 244). By this means, she evaded her obligations to submit to arbitration in case of dispute with neutrals during the war for which she was preparing. This was decidedly a war-measure. Britain's desire for war was felt throughout the world. British embassies and consulates abroad became "hot-beds of war psychosis". Mr. Eden, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Duff Cooper were regarded as the real spokesmen and future leaders of the nation (No.

245). On March 8, the British Secretary of State for War boasted of the size and efficiency of the army he could send to the continent (No. 246).

The new order in Czechoslovakia provided a pretext for Britain to intensify her preparations for war and her anti-German propaganda. Duff Cooper was allowed to launch a public attack on the Fuehrer in the House of Commons. In answering a protest by the German Ambassador, Lord Halifax justified these insults (No. 247). On March 29, Mr. Chamberlain announced that the Territorial Field Army which had been raised to war strength would be doubled (No. 248). On April 20 it was announced that a law for the setting-up of a Ministry of Supply, responsible for the economics of national defense in preparation for war, would be introduced (No. 250). The British public was kept in a state of tension and a pro-war atmosphere by means of speeches, reports and official gestures (No. 249). On April 26 compulsory military service was introduced in Britain (No. 251). The alleged reason was "a change in public opinion which had developed steadily for some considerable time" and "the new liabilities which Great Britain had incurred recently in Europe." These alleged reasons had been systematically created by the British Government in order to pave the way for the introduction of compulsory military training without opposition from the public. A report by German Ambassador von Dirksen dated July 10, 1939 (No. 252) summarized what was being done in Britain in order to "make war the nucleus of everyone's thought and talk." On July 28, Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for the Home Department, announced the establishment of a "shadow Ministry of Information" in case of emergency and defined the phrase "case of emergency" by saying "I mean actual war" (No. 254).

B. The British Attitude Toward the Czech Problem

(November, 1938 to April, 1939)

The Czech problem played an important part in the British policy of encirclement. Germany was reproached with having broken up Czechoslovakia by force and with having failed to fulfil her obligation to consult with Britain. These assertions are in contradiction to British official statements, as documents Nos. 255 to 266 reveal. Mr. Chamberlain himself stated in the House of Commons that he believed in the readjustment of the frontiers laid down at Versailles (No. 255). The British guarantee with regard to Czechoslovakia could not, therefore, signify a "crystallization of frontiers" (No. 256). On March 14, the day on which the Czechoslovak state collapsed, Mr. Chamberlain admitted in the House of Commons that there had been no unprovoked aggression upon Czechoslovakia (No. 257). On March 15, i. e. after the signing of the German-Czech Agreement, Mr. Chamberlain declared in the House *that the British guarantee to Czechoslovakia did not apply, since "the state whose boundaries we intended to guarantee broke up from within and thus met its end.* His Majesty's Government accordingly can no longer consider themselves bound by this obligation" (No. 259). This British official statement not only coincided exactly with the German view but with the historical fact that on March 14 at about 1 p. m. the disintegration of Czechoslovakia was effected by the Proclamation of Independence by the Slovak Diet.

At that moment the British pro-war party made a counterthrust and retained the upper hand. The German Embassy in London reported on March 17 a sudden stiffening in the attitude of official and parliamentary circles (No. 261). Mr. Chamberlain abandoned his own policy and gave way to the Opposition, which, from this time on, took over the reins of foreign policy in close cooperation with the bureaucrats of the Foreign Office (No. 263). There followed the British démarche in Berlin (No. 262) and the reproach that Germany had gone back on her signature to the Munich Agreement.

This reproach was likewise invented *ad hoc* for a special purpose. The documents Nos. 264 and 265 *clearly show that, as late as March 23, Britain did not regard Germany's action in the light of a violation of the consultation agreement made at Munich.* Replying to a question asked in the House of Commons as to what representations had been made in Berlin as a result of the failure of the German Government to consult with the British Government as promised at Munich, Mr. Butler, Secretary of State, said:—*"I am not aware that the communiqué in question contained such a statement. The second part of the question is thereby settled."* The Fuehrer was therefore entirely justified in repudiating before the Reichstag, on April 28, the charge that he had not kept the Munich Agreement (No. 266). The Munich Declaration, containing the solemn pledge to abstain from armed conflict, was broken rather by Britain, at the moment when she declared war against Germany.

C. British Encirclement Policy Since February, 1939

The next section, comprising documents Nos. 267 to 324, deals with Britain's policy of encirclement from February 1939 on, which is of primary importance in ascertaining the true causes of war. For it was only as a result of coupling the Polish complex with the British policy of encirclement that relatively simple questions, such as those relating to Danzig and the Polish Corridor, became so charged with explosive matter that they eventually wrecked the peace not only of Eastern but also of Western Europe. The British Government, which had morally capitulated to the Opposition some time before, henceforth carried out in action the foreign policy of those men whose acknowledged aim was the annihilation of Greater Germany. Even before the existence of the Czech pretext, Britain and France had openly made a declaration that in case of war each would hasten to the assistance of the other with her entire fighting forces (No. 267). Public confirmation of Anglo-French solidarity and the "remarkable British activity in Poland" as far back as February encouraged certain tendencies in Poland, "a gradual aggravation of German-Polish relations." In Birmingham, two days after Prague, Mr. Chamberlain

sounded the trumpet-call to attack Germany and openly announced the encirclement policy: Not only the Dominions and France but other Powers as well would wish to have Britain's counsel and advice (No. 269). Entirely unfounded rumors concerning a German ultimatum to Roumania were eagerly seized upon (No. 270) as a pretext for declaring that country in need of protection. In previous debates in the House of Commons, the Opposition as well as the Government party had drawn up a complete list of states, including Poland, which were to be persuaded to cooperate in the policy of encirclement. On March 20 Lord Halifax stated in the House of Lords that the Government were considering whether "the acceptance of wider mutual obligations, in the cause of mutual support, did not seem requisite," and said that the Government had lost no time "in placing themselves in close and practical consultation with other governments" (No. 271). That this referred mainly to Poland is proved by the reports of the German Chargé d'Affaires in London dated March 20 and 22 (Nos. 272 and 274). On March 24 the German Ambassador in Warsaw likewise reported that the British Ambassador had paid several visits to the Polish Foreign Office during the past few days (No. 206). *Thus, when on March 21 Poland once more discussed the problem of Danzig and the Corridor with the German Foreign Minister and on March 26 rejected the proposals, she was already aware that she was backed by the British guarantee and the coalition which was being formed.* Consequently, Britain was primarily responsible for the Polish refusal.

Moreover, in order to create the appropriate atmosphere, sensational and alarming reports regarding German plans to attack smaller nations, of which Norway was one, were broadcast (No. 273). The involvement of the Soviet Union was generally assumed from the very outset (No. 274). Without being consulted, Holland and Switzerland were also declared to be in need of protection (Nos. 276 and 311). Poland, being fully aware that she was indispensable to Britain, increased her demands until she was given *carte blanche* on March 31, 1939 (Nos. 206, 277 and 279). Poland's reply to Germany dated

March 26 was therefore the outcome not merely of Polish arrogance but of Britain's plan to make Poland the chief factor in the policy of encirclement. By this guarantee, the fate of the British Empire and the responsibility for peace or war was — as even Duff Cooper wrote at the time — "entrusted to a handful of unknown persons in Poland." In Wilhelmshaven, the Fuehrer issued the first note of warning when he said that Germany would never again make the fatal mistake of "realizing that she was being encircled but failing to offer timely resistance" (No. 281). That Britain realized she had completely reversed her policy and was aware of the risk she incurred by giving Poland a blank check, is clear from the speeches made by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir John Simon on April 3 (Nos. 283, 284). Obligations "to undertake war" were intentionally entered upon wherever Britain needed them as a pretext for control in Central and Eastern Europe and as a means of bringing about a preventive war. Military movements and adjustments went hand in hand with the diplomatic encirclement (No. 285). On April 6, on the occasion of Mr. Beck's visit to London, it was made known that the unilateral guarantee given to Poland on March 31 had been changed into a bilateral agreement (No. 286). Once again Britain, in full cognizance of the importance of her action, empowered Poland to decide unconditionally on the issue of peace or war. On April 13 the encirclement policy was extended to include Italy, as a party to the Axis, while unilateral guarantees were given to Roumania and Greece and contact with Turkey was established (No. 288). The pro-war party was satisfied with this course of action (No. 289). Efforts to win over Soviet Russia whose help was, at that time, considered indispensable for the success of the encirclement policy, were continued and intensified (No. 290). The Roumanian-Polish alliance also was to become an instrument directed against Germany (No. 291). Britain made an attempt to disguise her policy under the cloak of pacific assurances toward Germany (No. 293). But with the introduction of compulsory military training Britain left no room for doubt as to her ultimate aims. The Fuehrer was, therefore, forced to send a memo-

randum to Britain on April 28 (No. 294) in which, as in his address to the Reichstag (No. 295), he drew his conclusions from Britain's encirclement policy and stated that the British Government "no longer regarded war against Germany as an impossibility, but, on the contrary, as a capital problem of English foreign policy." They "have unilaterally deprived the Naval Agreement of its foundations and thus put it out of force." The premises of the Naval Agreement had been that the signatories should respect each other's vital interests. Even now the Fuehrer was prepared to come to an understanding and left the door open for "further negotiations." In the ranks of the British pro-war party there was much dissatisfaction "that the speech had not been of an aggressive nature" (No. 296).

Even now Britain made no attempt either to ease the tension over the Polish question by bringing her influence to bear on Warsaw or to re-establish contact between Poland and Germany. On the contrary, British encouragement of the overbearing attitude of the Poles made itself felt at once (No. 298). It was said that the problem of Danzig and the Polish Corridor could and must be settled (No. 299), but four months were allowed to elapse without any attempt to persuade Poland to accept the Fuehrer's offer to negotiate of April 28. The declaration of the Anglo-Turkish guarantee on May 12 was a further step towards the encirclement of the Axis Powers (No. 301). On May 19, Mr. Chamberlain declared that the encirclement front should be strengthened by final pacts with the guaranteed states and by fresh agreements with other powers (No. 303). Britain's efforts were now chiefly directed towards the inclusion of the Soviet Union (No. 306). The history of these negotiations, which Britain continued even to the point of self-humiliation, is well known. Britain's determination to bring about a preventive war was felt everywhere (No. 304). In his speech in Kassel (No. 305) the Fuehrer once more uttered a warning that Germany would not wait until the policy of encirclement was complete. He repeated his warnings (Nos. 307 and 308). By this time, the British Government was so much at one with the Opposition

that even a Churchill could discover no difference between them (No. 309). On June 23, the Franco-Turkish supplement to the British encirclement agreement of May 12 was announced (No. 310). In a speech delivered at Chatham House (No. 312), Lord Halifax revealed the aggressive nature of British foreign policy by declaring that British Policy was "only following the inevitable line prescribed by its own history." It was a return to the system of preserving the "Balance of Power", the object of which was to overthrow by means of coalitions the continental power strongest at any given time before it can escape from the toils of British control. At the end of June, discussions were held concerning the Supreme Command of the combined British and French forces (No. 313). The British Secretary of War openly declared himself in favor of the French system of alliances which dominated Europe and was now taken over by Britain (No. 316). Despite occasional opposition on the part of the states to be guaranteed, British encirclement activities were continued in Southeastern Europe (No. 317). Political credits were to pave the way for this policy of encirclement (No. 318). Towards the middle of July, Britain entertained her first "fears" of a Russo-German understanding which might result in an improvement of German-Polish relations (No. 319). In order to encourage pro-war feeling at home, in Poland and in France, the British Royal Air Force arranged demonstration and propaganda flights over France (No. 322). Towards the end of July, Britain declared herself prepared to enter upon military negotiations in order to secure an alliance with Soviet Russia at all costs, even before political negotiations had come to a conclusion (No. 323). This was a proceeding which Mr. Chamberlain, in the House of Commons, described as unique. The conclusion of the German-Russian Non-aggression Pact dealt a death-blow to the encirclement policy. But Britain, having intentionally burnt her bridges and having rendered a peaceful settlement impossible, now let matters take their course.

Chapter 3

GERMANY'S EFFORTS TO SECURE PEACEFUL RELATIONS WITH HER NEIGHBORS

The third chapter (Documents Nos. 325 to 348) shows how Germany endeavored to secure peaceful relations with her neighboring states. While Britain was trying to shout into all ears that Germany was living in a state of tension with the entire world and that all her neighbors had to reckon daily with the danger of attack, Germany herself, by means of solemn declarations, treaties, friendly agreements and alliances, was engaged in confirming the finality of her frontiers and establishing straightforward relations with other states, except Czechoslovakia and Poland, where the seeds of enmity had been sown and fostered by those peoples themselves.

Just as Germany had confirmed her peaceful intentions towards Great Britain (Munich Declaration, 217), so her decision never again to allow a war to take place between Germany and France was declared and signed at Paris on December 6, 1938 (Nos. 329 to 332). This was a solemn confirmation of the Fuehrer's many statements to that effect made since the settlement of the Saar question (Nos. 325, 326). In a speech delivered on January 30, 1937, the Fuehrer had already given the assurance that the German Government was prepared at any time to "recognize and guarantee" Belgium and Holland "as inviolable neutral territories" (No. 325). Belgian inviolability and integrity then became the subject of an exchange of Notes between Germany and Belgium (Nos. 333, 334), while the Netherlands were of the opinion that the inviolability of Dutch territory could not be the subject of a settlement in which the Netherlands participated (Nos. 335, 336).

The fact that, after the re-union of Austria with the Reich, Germany had new frontiers in common with Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Italy, Yugoslavia and Hungary, caused the German Government to issue a number of special declarations by

which these frontiers were proclaimed final and inviolable (No. 337). Switzerland had already received the Fuehrer's assurance that Germany would always respect her inviolability and neutrality (No. 339). A declaration was made to Hungary through the German Minister concerning the inviolability of the German-Hungarian frontier (No. 341). The assurances given to Italy and Yugoslavia were renewed in a particularly solemn manner on the occasion of the Fuehrer's visit to Rome (No. 338) and the visit of the Prince Regent of Yugoslavia to Berlin (No. 340).

In the north, a treaty was concluded with Lithuania on March 22, 1939, which contained, among other provisions, a mutual pledge by the two countries not to employ force against each other (No. 342). Later, in his speech to the Reichstag on April 28, 1939, the Fuehrer declared himself prepared to give all those states mentioned in President Roosevelt's telegram assurance of non-aggression, on condition that such assurance should be absolutely reciprocal (No. 343). Germany's subsequent exchange of views with Sweden, Norway and Finland, resulted in these three states renewing their declaration to the German Government that they felt themselves in no wise threatened by Germany and that they had no intention of entering into a non-aggression pact with any country whatsoever (No. 344). On the other hand, non-aggression pacts were signed between Germany and Denmark on May 31, 1939 (No. 345), between Germany and Esthonia on June 7, 1939 (No. 346) and between Germany and Latvia on the same day (No. 347). Finally, on August 23, 1939 a non-aggression pact was signed between Germany and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (No. 348).

POLAND AS THE INSTRUMENT OF BRITAIN'S WILL TO WAR

A. The Effect of Britain's Encirclement Policy on the Polish Attitude

1. Campaign to Exterminate the German Minority

The fourth chapter proves how Poland was misused as an instrument for Britain's desire for war (Nos. 349 to 482). The effects of the *carte blanche* given by Britain were immediately felt. Poland commenced an extermination campaign against the German minority. On March 27, 1939, the day following the Polish refusal, anti-German demonstrations occurred in Bromberg amid shouts of "Down with Hitler!", "We want Danzig!", "We want Königsberg!" (No. 349). In another place, Poles interrupted a gathering of the German colony, destroyed the German national flag and a picture of the Fuehrer (No. 350). As a result, a serious protest was lodged with the Polish authorities (Nos. 351 and 352). At the end of March, reports of increased anti-German agitation and demonstrations, assaults and annexationist demands were received from Thorn and Posen (Nos. 353, 354 and 355). The excesses in Posen lasted a whole week. Assaults on German nationals became more and more frequent, and there were serious injuries (Nos. 355 and 357). German protests were of no avail (No. 360). At the beginning of April, a public appeal proclaiming the general program for de-Germanization of the country was circulated throughout Poland (No. 358). Towards the middle of April, the first German fugitives crossed the frontier (No. 359). It was practically impossible for the Consulates to report every individual case (No. 361). Anti-German agitation raged unchecked in Upper Silesia (No. 362). Reports from the German Consuls were full of terrorist acts (No. 363). The Polish Insurgents Society gave the orders for these actions (No. 364). On May 6, the Consul-General in

Kattowitz reported two hundred acts of terror (No. 365) and on May 19, another hundred, all of which had occurred in Upper Silesia alone (No. 372). All Germans were in fear of their lives and property. Terrorism spread also to Congress Poland and was intensified by systematic acts of incendiarism (No. 366). The last strongholds of German culture were destroyed (Nos. 369, 373, 374, 377, 379, 383, 385, 390, 391, 399, etc.). In despair, the German minority appealed to the Polish President (No. 369). The British Government, although kept informed by the German Embassy in London of the nature of these developments which inevitably endangered peace (No. 368), remained inactive. Towards the middle of May, anti-German demonstrations developed into pogroms, in the course of which thousands of Germans were hunted "like unprotected game" (Nos. 370, 371). The number of fugitives increased (No. 374) as did Polish "sabre-rattling", the declaration of annexationist war aims (Nos. 367, 378) and public insults and affronts to the Fuehrer which led to renewed protests (No. 382). In the commercial world, German co-operative societies, dairies and pharmacies were systematically liquidated (Nos. 380, 395). On June 7 a report from Lodz stated: "The threat of death, torture, etc., for German nationals, has become an everyday matter of course." Whole families, because of constant threats of murder, passed their nights in the shelter of the woods (No. 381).

The only answer to protests lodged with the Polish Foreign Office was a shrug of the shoulders and the tacit avowal that nothing could be done against the military authorities and Polish chauvinism (Nos. 382, 385). Two-and-a-half months after the British guarantee had been given, the German Ambassador in Warsaw summed up his impressions by saying that "anti-German agitation had now assumed proportions the like of which I had never witnessed during my many years of office" (No. 385). After the pharmacies, hospitals and buildings of confessional societies, the German homes and social centers in Posen, Bromberg, Lodz, Tarnowitz, Karwin and Oderberg were closed and expropriated (Nos. 377, 379, 385,

390). The next target was the religious life of the German community, particularly the Protestant Church. A chapel belonging to the "Brüdergemeinde" was demolished (No. 388). Polish bishops were requested by a colonel on the General Staff to pray "that the time of tribulation for our Polish brethren beyond the frontier might be shortened and that another Grunwald might release them from bondage" (No. 392). A German Embassy report dated July 5 describes the persecution suffered by the Protestant Church and its ministers and shows that the attacks on churches and pastors had become systematic (No. 394). The German Protestant Theological College in Posen was closed (No. 411). Christians in England, although they were informed of these occurrences, paid no attention. Time and time again the authorities themselves proved to be responsible for this process of liquidation (No. 396). The German Ambassador in Warsaw established Britain's co-responsibility for this state of affairs when he wrote, "the Polish Government obviously feel themselves so powerful by virtue of the British *carte blanche* that they no longer deem it necessary to consider German interests in their dealings with the minority" (No. 397). About the middle of July the Consul at Lemberg reported that in his district the same methods were employed against Germans as against the Ukrainians during the notorious pacification measures in 1930 (No. 400). The soldiery now began to participate in the outrages (No. 403). Germans in Galicia were faced with annihilation; the outlook was hopeless, and they were threatened with arson and murder (No. 407). What was left undone by open terrorism was made up for by an insupportable burden of taxes and chicanery on the part of the authorities (No. 408).

In August 1939 persecution of the German minority in every Voivode* district was approaching its climax. Search-warrants and arrests were the order of the day (Nos. 410, 412). The last of the German societies were closed (No. 414). A Foreign Office record revealed innumerable acts of terror, thirty-eight grave and characteristic cases (No. 415). This list of horrors was exceeded in gruesomeness only by the Bromberg

* Voivode is a provincial governor.

night of massacre and the assassination of Germans throughout all Poland, tragic proof of which was discovered by the German Army during the Polish Campaign. Germans living in frontier districts were forcibly conveyed into the interior or imprisoned in concentration camps (No. 417). The number of fugitives exceeded 70,000 (No. 416).

II. Polish Measures Against Danzig

After Poland had declared, with British backing, any alteration of the Danzig status would constitute a *casus belli,* Danzig had to be prepared for the worst. Britain had given Poland a free hand. As early as May, Polish aircraft and Polish soldiery violated the frontiers (No. 418). The Westerplatte garrison was increased in violation of existing treaties, and troops were concentrated around the Danzig border (No. 419). At Kalthof, on May 20, a citizen of Danzig was killed by shots fired from a car belonging to the Polish Diplomatic Mission in Danzig (No. 420). Poland even made the assassination the subject of a provocative exchange of Notes (No. 421). Another frontier incident occurred on May 23 (No. 422). At the same time Poland systematically increased the number of Polish customs inspectors (No. 423), an action which called forth protests from the Danzig Senate. Poland replied with a threat to increase further the Polish customs personnel (No. 425). Such officials were maintained chiefly for purposes of espionage (Nos. 424, 426). In July, Poland exerted economic pressure on Danzig. The import of foodstuffs from Poland (No. 429) and the export of Danzig's manufactured foodstuffs to Poland were prevented (No. 431). Danzig was to be subjected to an economic blockade. Poland took steps to provoke incidents in Danzig (No. 428). The representative of the Polish Minority in the Danzig Diet declared at a demonstration in Gdynia "that the Polish population of Danzig would, with the aid of the Polish army, achieve the union of Danzig with Poland, its motherland" (No. 430). Tension reached its height as a result of a Polish ultimatum issued the night between August 4 and 5 (Nos. 432, 433, 434). Instructions falsely alleged to have been issued by the Danzig Senate were made the pretext for this

ultimatum and for threats of immediate "retaliatory measures". From August 23 on German commercial planes were, in many instances, subjected to fire by Polish forces stationed on the Hela Peninsula (No. 435, 436). Meantime, the militarization of Polish bases in Danzig continued, contrary to the terms of the treaty. The German Supreme Command reported, upon the conquest of the Westerplatte, that the Polish garrison stationed there, though limited by treaty to 88 men, actually numbered 240. The terrain had been utilized for the erection of fortifications with artillery and machine-gun emplacements (Appendix).

B. The Last Phase of the German-Polish Crisis*

By the beginning of July, the persistent British assurances had conjured up a decidedly warlike atmosphere in Poland. Polish bellicosity could not be intensified by the attitude of the British Prime Minister, in his statement to the House of Commons on July 10, concerning the German-Polish difference. Mr. Chamberlain repeated and confirmed the British assurances given to Poland, especially with regard to the Danzig question (No. 438). From this statement it is obvious that Britain unquestioningly accepted the Polish version and that, for all her protestations that she was in favor of an amicable solution, she did nothing to persuade Poland to adopt a more conciliatory attitude. On the contrary, Mr. Chamberlain's statement of July 10, 1939 shows that it was Britain who, by her encirclement policy, charged the problem of Danzig and the Corridor to a tension that was bound to lead to an explosion. We know today that the British guarantee was in actual fact directed exclusively against Germany, and that Poland later lost the greater part of her territory to Soviet Russia without Britain's making a move of any sort. These facts shed full light on that characteristic British irresponsibility which permitted Mr. Chamberlain to represent the moderate German proposals regarding the problem of Danzig and the Corridor as a threat to Poland's existence and

* Some of the documents contained in this section have already been published in the White Paper, "Documents Concerning the Last Phase of the German-Polish Crisis."

independence. The same statement contains that obvious juggling with the dates of the German proposals of March 21, their rejection by Poland on March 26 and the British guarantee of March 31. With the support of documents Nos. 269 to 279 we have already proved that this is a case of deliberate falsification of dates and of their underlying significance. In a record dated July 13 (No. 439) State Secretary Baron von Weizsäcker caught a second error contained in the British Prime Minister's statement. The Prime Minister had asserted that Germany had guaranteed the *status quo* in Danzig until 1944. The British Ambassador in Berlin could not contradict Baron von Weizsäcker when the latter pointed out that such public statements could do nothing but "encourage Poland" instead of "bringing her to reason" (No. 440). Meanwhile Poland was given repeated demonstrations of Britain's will to war. It was for this purpose that General Ironside visited Warsaw (No. 443). British determination to fight was met with an equal determination on the part of the Poles. Just before the arrival of the British visitor, Marshal Smigly-Rydz in his first public interview (which was also an overt participation in foreign policy) purposely committed himself by a decided "Never!" in connection with the Danzig question (Nos. 441, 442), thereby once more barring the way to direct contact. By the end of July, the propaganda of Polish chauvinists combined with British incitement had succeeded in making all classes of the Polish nation ready for war, and led them to await armed conflict not only with certainty but with confidence (No. 444). On August 9, Germany informed the Polish Government that a repetition of the demands, in the form of an ultimatum, on the Free City of Danzig would lead to greater tension in the relationship between Germany and Poland, and that the responsibility for such consequences would devolve exclusively on the Polish Government. At the same time the attention of the Polish Government was drawn to the fact that, if the economic measures taken by the Polish Government against Danzig were maintained, there would be no choice left to the Free City but to seek other export and import possibilities (No. 445). The Polish Government answered by a com-

munication in which they went so far as to state that Poland would consider any intervention on the part of the Reich Government in the Danzig affairs, to the detriment of Polish rights or interests, as an aggressive act (No. 446). The Polish reply had been approved by Britain and France (No. 447).

To avoid serious consequences Great Britain's attention was called to the gravity of this development (No. 448). Nor can France claim that Germany did not warn her against the course of action chosen by Poland. In the conversation between Baron von Weizsäcker and the French Ambassador (No. 449) on August 15 "very grave and warning language" was used, and special attention called to the ultimatum-like threats against Danzig, as well as to other excesses. It was pointed out that by this line of conduct Poland was merely bringing ruin upon herself and causing her friends to jeopardize their very existence. The French Ambassador, however, declined in the name of his government to bring any pressure to bear upon Poland. On the same day, Baron von Weizsäcker used the same grave language in speaking to the British Ambassador, calling his attention once more to the fact that the British guarantee was encouraging Polish arrogance, and that Britain had approved of the threatening Note addressed to Danzig (No. 450). Henderson could find nothing convincing to say in reply. Britain again ignored the advice to bring Poland to reason with regard to her attitude towards the Reich and the Danzig question. Britain had not only uncritically adopted the Polish point of view (No. 451) but deliberately preferred armed conflict. The conviction that this was so was felt even outside Europe (No. 452). Great Britain was not to be diverted from her purpose even by the historic warning implied in the announcement of a non-aggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union (No. 453). Mr. Chamberlain replied publicly (No. 453) and in a letter to the Fuehrer (No. 454) that Poland would be left in possession of the blank check given to her. From this letter and the comments made on it by the Britsh Ambassador during a conversation with the Fuehrer at Berchtesgaden on August 23 (No. 455), it became clear that Britain was not prepared to do anything beyond pronouncing a few non-committal phrases in

order to resume direct negotiations with Germany. Nearly five months had been allowed to slip by. Poland had been encouraged in her overweening attitude so that the task of bridging the gulf and thus enabling Poland to come to terms was thrust upon Germany. In this conversation the Fuehrer left no room for doubt as to Britain's entire responsibility for the Polish crisis. He pointed out that Britain had always rejected Germany's friendly advances and would "rather have war than anything to Germany's advantage." The German point of view is clearly summarized in the written reply sent by the Fuehrer to Mr. Chamberlain on August 23, 1939 (No. 456). It points out the absence of any direct cause for dispute with Britain, the moderation and justice of the German demands to Poland, the repercussions of the British guarantee, the critical turn in the Danzig situation, the persecution of the German minority in Poland, the realization of Britain's determination to face a war, and Germany's determination to protect her interests and to reply to any British military preparations with mobilization on her own part. The communication closes with the assurance that if the future were to bring a change in Britain's attitude towards Germany, none would welcome it more than the Fuehrer.

Although the British Prime Minister's communication of August 22 and the speeches made on the following day by British statesmen betrayed a complete lack of comprehension of the German point of view, the Fuehrer made a fresh attempt to come to an understanding with Great Britain at 1:30 p. m. on August 25 (No. 457). He desired, as he told the British Ambassador, "to take a step in regard to England which was just as decisive as the step taken in regard to Russia, the result of which had been the recent pact". After repudiating the suggestion that Germany wanted to conquer the world, he propounded the Polish problem in all its danger and urgency. Germany, he said, was resolved to put an end to the Macedonian conditions on her eastern frontier. There would not be a war on two fronts, the agreement with Russia was unconditional and represented a new long-term policy. He would be ready, upon a settlement of the German-Polish problem, to approach Britain again with a comprehensive offer. He approved of the British Empire and was prepared to stake the

might of the German Reich for its existence, provided that his limited colonial demands, which could be settled by peaceful negotiations, were fulfilled and his obligations to Italy and Soviet-Russia remained untouched. He was also ready to accept a reasonable limitation of armaments. In the West there could be no question of any frontier correction. Immediately after the settlement of the German-Polish question he would approach the British Government with an offer. This was an offer of European and indeed of world-wide significance. Its rejection by Britain appears all the more irresponsible in the light of subsequent events, the outbreak of war and the burden it has laid upon neutral countries throughout the world. Britain took her time in replying to the Fuehrer's generous proposals. Before doing so, she sealed a contract the results of which were of the most serious consequences for the further development of the situation. The Anglo-Polish mutual assistance pact was now finally committed to writing and signed in London by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Polish Ambassador on August 25 (No. 453), the same day on which the above-mentioned conversation took place between the Fuehrer and the British Ambassador in Berlin. By this step the fate of Britain was finally and irrevocably linked with that of Poland.

The British attitude to the Fuehrer's proposals of August 25 is contained in the Memorandum which was not handed to him by the British Ambassador until 10:30 p. m. on August 28, after three precious days had been lost (No. 463). In it the British Government refused to consider future German-British relations and the pacification of Europe apart from Polish intransigence. They showed themselves fully aware, however, of the danger implied by the present situation on Germany's eastern frontier and agreed with Germany on the urgent necessity of reaching a speedy settlement. They therefore proposed that the next step should be the initiation of direct discussions between the German and Polish Governments, and added that they had received a definite assurance from the Polish Government that they were prepared to enter into discussions with the German Government concerning the German-Polish problems but that any settlement

arrived at must be guaranteed by other Powers. We know now that in this statement the British Government had no scruples about misleading the German Government intentionally. The correspondence which passed between the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the British Ambassador in Warsaw and which has since been published proves that the assertion made in the British Memorandum of August 28, to the effect that the British Government had received a definite assurance of Poland's readiness to enter into direct discussions, did not correspond with the actual state of affairs.

The Fuehrer, in his reply handed to the British Ambassador at 6:45 p. m. on August 29 (No. 464), accepted the British proposal. He drew attention, however, to the fact that the situation in the East was intolerable for a Great Power and that a state of affairs had now been reached in which continued acquiescence or even inactive observation was no longer possible. The Fuehrer further pointed out that the time which remained to remove the state of acute tension might be only a matter of hours. The German Government had long been trying to open up a way for peaceful negotiations without meeting with any support from the Polish Government. Despite their skepticism concerning the prospects of the proposed direct negotiations, the German Government accepted the British proposal and agreed that through the mediation of the British Government a Polish plenipotentiary should come to Berlin, whose arrival they would expect on Wednesday, August 30. They would immediately draft proposals for a solution acceptable to themselves and would, if possible, make these proposals available for the British Government before the Polish negotiator arrived. *Poland's reply was general mobilization* (No. 465).

While the British Government was still considering the Fuehrer's communication of August 25, an exchange of letters took place between the French Premier Daladier and the Fuehrer (Nos. 460 and 461). In his reply, the Fuehrer once again explained the German point of view on the German-Polish question in detail, and reiterated once more his firm resolve to recognize the existing German-French frontier as final.

Once more the British Government took their time in replying to the German suggestion regarding the dispatch of a Polish plenipotentiary. It was not until midnight of August 30 that Henderson handed over the British Government's reply (No. 466, Appendix I), and declared at the same time that the British Government was not in a position to advise the Polish Government to dispatch an emissary with full powers. They suggested rather that Germany should approach Poland in the normal diplomatic way. In the Memorandum the British Government confirmed the fact that the German Government had accepted the British proposals and said that, although they realized the danger arising from the fact that two mobilized armies were standing face to face, they considered it impracticable to establish contacts so early (August 30). Britain thereby allowed more than twenty-four hours to elapse without establishing direct contact.

The only course left open to the German Minister for Foreign Affairs in these circumstances was to note the fact (No. 466) that Poland's reply had been general mobilization and that Germany had waited in vain for the arrival of a Polish representative. In order to show what Germany had intended to propose to the Polish representative, the German Foreign Minister read aloud, with minute comment, the German proposals which had meantime been drawn up and which, tabulated in the form of sixteen points, represented the fairest possible solution of the dispute (No. 466, Appendix II). The official German statement published on August 31 (No. 468) points out that Germany had waited a further twenty-four hours in vain for the arrival of an authorized Polish delegate, and that the Polish Ambassador, who called at the German Foreign Office at 6:30 p. m. on August 31, had not been given full powers to negotiate, but had merely declared that Poland was favorably *considering* the British suggestions. The Polish Broadcasting Service (No. 469) and the entire Polish press immediately rejected the German proposals as unacceptable and "impudent."

False accounts of these events have been circulated by the British as well as by the Poles. In particular, the assertion is made by the British and the Poles alike that Poland

knew nothing of the proposals at the time she was said to have rejected them. It is also averred that the British Ambassador, to whom the German Minister for Foreign Affairs read the proposals aloud "at top speed," did not understand them and could not pass them on as they were not handed to him. It must be borne in mind that the main contents of the German proposals were already contained in the Fuehrer's reply of August 29 (No. 464), which Britain had sent to the British Ambassador in Warsaw on August 30 to be communicated to the Polish Government. Moreover, British official documents which have been published since then prove beyond a doubt that Henderson had in fact very well understood the German proposals contained in the so-called sixteen points and had, that same night, immediately after his conversation with the German Foreign Minister, communicated a correct summary of their main contents to London and also to his British colleague in Warsaw. On the morning of August 31, Henderson, as he himself admits in his final report dated September 20, informed the Polish Ambassador in Berlin of the details of the German proposals (i.e. the sixteen points), which he had meantime obtained also in writing from a reliable source. According to the same final report of Henderson, the Polish Ambassador, after the sixteen points had been communicated to him, spent the forenoon in telephone conversations with Warsaw. The Polish Government were therefore fully aware of the proposals. If Britain had been anxious to establish contact, she would still have had both the time and the technical means to do so even at this stage. However, not only did Britain refuse to advise Poland to accept the German proposals, a fact proved by the documents published by Britain, *but Beck declared that he would, of course, not accept a German invitation and that Lipski would not be authorized to accept a document containing the German proposals.* It was, moreover, clear from the outset that, after Britain had for five months and in the face of growing tension refrained from persuading Poland to establish direct contact with Germany, her final proposal was in effect nothing more than an attempt to set the stage so that she would not be caught in the act of manœuvering for the outbreak of war in collaboration with her Polish ally. This is

shown by the various warnings, issued to Warsaw by the British Foreign Secretary and likewise officially published in Britain, in which the exercise of extreme caution "in view of world opinion" is demanded. It was not a question of removing the existing tension by peaceful means but of preserving the rôle of peace-maker in the eyes of the world.

Thus, after every possibility of reaching a peaceful settlement of the German-Polish crisis was exhausted, the Fuehrer was obliged to resist by force the force which Poland long had used against Danzig, against the German minority in Poland, and finally against Germany herself in numerous frontier violations (No. 470). The German point of view was conclusively expounded by the Fuehrer in his speech to the Reichstag on September 1 (No. 471). The provocative attitude of Poland on Germany's eastern frontier rendered further forbearance impossible. The critical question now was whether the Western Powers would be frivolous enough to involve Western Europe in the conflict. That Great Britain was determined to do so was finally proved by the note which Sir Nevile Henderson handed to the Foreign Office at 9 p. m. on September 1, 1939. In it the British Government demanded the suspension of "all aggressive action against Poland" as well as assurances that the Reich Government were "prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory," otherwise Great Britain would without hesitation fulfil her obligations to Poland (No. 472). At 10 p.m. the French Ambassador handed the German Foreign Minister a note couched in identical terms (No. 473). The German Foreign Minister repudiated in strong terms the charge that Germany had attacked Poland, but said he was prepared to communicate the contents of the Notes to the Fuehrer.

At this juncture, *an effort to mediate was made by the Duce,* as is shown by document No. 474. He proposed an armistice and the calling of a conference within two or three days. The German Government declared themselves ready to agree to this proposal; the French Government had likewise replied in the affirmative. In this connection document No. 475, a communication issued by the Havas News Agency on September 2, 1939, is of historic significance. This information was afterwards

withdrawn under British pressure, as it turned out. Britain had meantime forced the French Government to conform to the British attitude, i.e. insistence on the withdrawal of the German troops (No. 476). Thus the Duce's effort at mediation had been blasted at the very moment when success seemed within reach. Instead, Britain sent an ultimatum at 9 a. m. on the morning of September 3 containing a time limit expiring at 11 a. m. in which the demands for the suspension of all aggressive action and the withdrawal of the German forces were repeated and the declaration made that, in case of a refusal, a state of war would exist between the two countries as from the hour of the time limit (No. 477). At 11:15 a. m. on the same day Lord Halifax informed the German Chargé d'Affaires in London that Britain regarded a state of war as existing between herself and Germany as from 11 a. m. on September 3, 1939 (No. 478). No other course remained for the Reich Government but to refuse "to receive, to accept, let alone to comply with" demands in the nature of ultimata made by the British Government. In a Memorandum handed to the British Ambassador by the German Minister for Foreign Affairs on September 3 at 11:30 a. m. Germany rejected these demands and once again set forth the German point of view and Britain's responsibility for the outbreak of hostilities, declaring that she would "reply to any act of aggression on the part of Great Britain with the same weapons and in the same way" (No. 470). At 12:30 p. m. on the same day the French Ambassador called at the Foreign Office and handed over a Note to the effect that the French Government saw themselves in duty bound from September 3, 5 p. m. on, "to fulfil the contractual obligations which they have entered into with Poland" (No. 480), an intimation differing from the British not merely in regard to time. The German Minister for Foreign Affairs, calling attention to the frustration by Britain of the Italian attempt at mediation, and to the British ultimatum which set a time limit of two hours, expressed his regret that apparently an entirely unjustifiable French war of aggression was to break out against Germany, in spite of her efforts to come to an understanding with France. The present French Government would bear the re-

sponsibility for the suffering brought upon both countries by such a step (No. 481).

In a telegraphic communication sent by the State Secretary in the German Foreign Office to all German diplomatic representatives, Britain's responsibility for the outbreak of war was conclusively declared (No. 482). History will prove the justice of this verdict.

To remove betimes the dangerous tinder which had accumulated on the German-Polish frontier since the signing of the Treaty of Versailles would have constituted one of the noblest tasks in the cause of European peace. Britain, as one of the countries chiefly responsible for this danger-spot, let twenty years pass without taking any steps to put into practice her much-lauded principle of "peaceful change". On the contrary, Britain consciously prevented the elimination of the dangerous elements from German-Polish relations by her guarantee enticing Poland to join the anti-German front at the very time when the Fuehrer, continuing his arduous labors of the past six years to establish an understanding, was endeavoring to settle German-Polish problems amicably by means of negotiation. Britain frustrated Germany's efforts to reach a peaceful settlement even at the eleventh hour and encouraged Poland in her aggressive attitude. Finally, when Germany had been compelled to counter Polish provocation by taking matters into her own hands, it was the British attitude alone which overthrew the Duce's proposal to mediate. Thus Britain clearly demonstrated that the Polish question was merely a pretext for her to start a war of annihilation against the strongest Power on the Continent.

Fully realizing this fact, the German nation, conscious of the justice of its cause and its own power, has entered with high determination upon the war forced upon it by Great Britain.

The significance and aim of the struggle are clear from its causes. They were again briefly summarized by the German Foreign Minister in his speech at Danzig on October 24, when he stated that the German nation would "not lay down arms until the safety of the Reich in Europe was assured and a guarantee was obtained that a similar attack on the German nation would be impossible for all time to come."

CHAPTER ONE

Development of German-Polish Relations

A. The Polish Fight Against German Culture in Poland and Against Danzig from 1919 to 1933

I. The Position of the German Minority in Poland

No. 1 Extract from a Memorandum Circulated by Mr. Lloyd George, British Prime Minister March 25, 1919

"Some considerations for the Peace Conference before they finally draft their terms"

. . . . . The maintenance of peace will then depend upon there being no causes of exasperation constantly stirring up the spirit of patriotism, of justice or of fair play. To achieve redress our terms may be severe, they may be stern and even ruthless, but at the same time they can be so just that the country on which they are imposed will feel in its heart that it has no right to complain. But injustice, arrogance, displayed in the hour of triumph will never be forgotten or forgiven.

For these reasons I am, therefore, strongly averse to transferring more Germans from German rule to the rule of some other nation than can possibly be helped. I cannot conceive any greater cause of future war than that the German people, who have certainly proved themselves one of the most vigorous and powerful races in the world, should be surrounded by a number of small states, many of them consisting of people who have never previously set up a stable government for themselves, but each of them containing large masses of Germans clamoring for reunion with their native land. The proposal of the Polish Commission that we should place 2,100,000 Germans under the control of a people which is of a different religion and which has never proved its capacity for stable self-government throughout its history must, in my judgment, lead sooner or later to a new war in the East of Europe. . . . . .

No. 2 Extract from the Observations of the German Peace Delegation on the Peace Conditions May 29, 1919*

(Translation)

By the settlement of the territorial questions in the east as provided for in Articles 27 and 28, portions of the Prussian provinces of East and

* Enclosure in the Note addressed by the President of the German Peace Delegation at Versailles to the President of the Versailles Conference on May 29, 1919.

West Prussia, Pomerania, Posen and Silesia more or less considerable in area, which are not inhabited by an undeniably Polish population, are allocated to the Polish State. Without considering the ethnographical aspects of the case, numerous German cities and large areas of purely German territory are being handed over to Poland merely in order that Poland may receive suitable military frontiers against Germany or important railway junctions. Districts which at various times during centuries have been separated from Poland or over which Poland never ruled, are now being indiscriminately allotted to her. The acceptance of the suggested settlement would therefore involve a violation of large and undeniably German districts. Such a settlement would, moreover, be contrary to the Wilsonian principle that in settling national questions care must be exercised to avoid "introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe and consequently of the world." . . . .

No. 3 M. Clemenceau, President of the Supreme Council of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, to M. Paderewski, Polish Prime Minister

Extract

(Translation)

Paris, June 24, 1919

On behalf of the Supreme Council of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers I have the honor to communicate to you herewith in its final form the text of the Treaty which, in accordance with Article 93 of the Treaty of Peace with Germany, Poland will be asked to sign on the occasion of the confirmation of her recognition as an independent State and of the transference in her favor of the territories included in the former German Empire which are assigned to her by the said Treaty.

. . . . . In this connection I must also call to your attention the fact that the Polish nation owes the recovery of its independence to the endeavors and sacrifices of the Powers in whose name I am addressing you. It is by their decision that Polish sovereignty is being re-established over the territories in question and that the inhabitants of these territories are being incorporated in the Polish nation. For the secure possession of these territories, Poland will in the future largely depend upon the support which the resources of these Powers will afford to the League of Nations. There rests, therefore, upon these Powers an obligation, which they cannot evade, to secure in the most permanent and solemn form guarantees for certain essential rights which will afford to the inhabitants the necessary protection, whatever changes may take place in the internal constitution of the Polish State.

. . . . . In order to meet this obligation, Clause 93 was inserted in the Treaty of Peace with Germany.

. . . . . The Powers are dealing here with a new situation, and experience has shown that new provisions are necessary. The territories now being transferred both to Poland and to other states inevitably include a large population speaking other languages and belonging to other races than the people with whom they will be incorporated. Unfortunately, the races have been estranged by long years of bitter hostility. It may be presumed that these populations will be more easily reconciled to their new position if they know from the very beginning that they have assured protection and adequate guarantees against any danger of unjust treatment or oppression. The very knowledge that these guarantees exist will, it is hoped, materially help the adjustment which all desire, and will indeed do much to prevent the necessity of imposing it by force.

As regards the individual provisions of the present Treaty, Article 2 guarantees to all inhabitants those fundamental rights which are actually granted in every civilized state.

Provisions 3 to 6 are designed to ensure for all genuine residents in the territories now transferred to Polish sovereignty the full privileges of citizenship. Articles 7 and 8, which are in accordance with the above, provide against any discrimination against those Polish citizens who by their religion, their language, or their race, differ from the large mass of the Polish population. We understand that the Polish Government, far from raising any objection to the content of these articles, have already declared their own firm intention of basing their institutions on the cardinal principles enunciated therein.

The following articles are of rather a different nature in that they provide further special privileges for certain groups of these minorities. . . . .

No. 4 Treaty Concluded Between the Principal Allied and Associated Powers and Poland at Versailles June 28, 1919

Extract

Article 1

Poland undertakes that the stipulations contained in Articles 2 to 8 of this Chapter shall be recognized as fundamental laws, and that no law, regulation or official action shall conflict or interfere with these stipulations, nor shall any law, regulation or official action prevail to them.

Article 2

Poland undertakes to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Poland without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion.

All inhabitants of Poland shall be entitled to the free exercise, whether public or private, of any creed, religion or belief, whose practices are not inconsistent with public order or public morals.

Article 7

All Polish nationals shall be equal before the law and shall enjoy the same civil and political rights without distinction as to race, language or religion.

Differences of religion, creed or confession shall not prejudice any Polish national in matters relating to the enjoyment of civil or political rights, as, for instance, admission to public employment, functions and honors, or the exercise of professions and industries.

No restriction shall be imposed on the free use by any Polish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, in religion, in the press or in publications of any kind, or at public meetings.

Notwithstanding any establishment by the Polish Government of an official language, adequate facilities shall be given to Polish nationals of non-Polish speech for the use of their language, either orally or in writing, before the courts.

Article 8

Polish nationals who belong to racial, religious or linguistic minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as the other Polish nationals. In particular they shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense charitable, religious and social institutions, schools and other educational establishments, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their religion freely therein.

Article 9

Poland will provide in the public educational system in towns and districts in which a considerable proportion of Polish nationals of other than Polish speech are residents, adequate facilities for ensuring that in the primary schools the instruction shall be given to the children of such Polish nationals through the medium of their own language. This provision shall not prevent the Polish Government from making the teaching of the Polish language obligatory in the said schools.

In towns and districts where there is a considerable proportion of Polish nationals belonging to racial, religious or linguistic minorities, these minorities shall be assured an equitable share in the enjoyment and application of the sums which may be provided out of public funds under the State, municipal or other budget, for educational, religious or charitable purposes.

The provisions of this Article shall apply to Polish citizens of German speech only in that part of Poland which was German territory on August 1, 1914.

Article 12

Poland agrees that the stipulations in the foregoing Articles, so far as they affect persons belonging to racial, religious or linguistic minorities, constitute obligations of international concern and shall be placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations. They shall not be modified without the assent of a majority of the Council of the League of Nations. The United States, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan hereby agree not to withhold their assent from any modification in these Articles which is in due form assented to by a majority of the Council of the League of Nations.

Poland agrees that any Member of the Council of the League of Nations shall have the right to bring to the attention of the Council any infraction, or any danger of infraction, of any of these obligations, and that the Council may thereupon take such action and give such direction as it may deem proper and effective in the circumstances.

Poland further agrees that any difference of opinion as to questions of law or fact arising out of these Articles between the Polish Government and any one of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers or any other Power, a Member of the Council of the League of Nations, shall be held to be a dispute of an international character under Article 14 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The Polish Government hereby consents that any such dispute shall, if the other party thereto demands, be referred to the Permanent Court of International Justice. The decision of the Permanent Court shall be final and shall have the same force and effect as an award under Article 13 of the Covenant.

No. 5 Memorandum Handed to the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs by the German Minister in Warsaw, November 20, 1920

Extract

(Translation)

. . . . . The German Government have, until now, refrained from collecting and submitting the large number of cases for complaint which are in their possession, because they continued to hope that the excitement prevailing on both sides of the frontier as a result of the war would gradually subside under the influence of a restrained attitude on the part of the population and the authorities. For the same reason they have likewise avoided arousing the public in Germany anew by publishing particularly incriminating cases in the press.

The German Government now feel compelled, however, as a result of the official steps continually undertaken by the Polish Legation in Berlin and the usually simultaneous announcement of such steps in the Polish press, and also in view of public opinion in Germany which has

been much alarmed in consequence of the above, to bring several specially serious facts taken from the existing records to the notice of the Polish Government. At the same time they draw attention to the fact that in view of the great number of cases they are unable to quote individual instances, but that the evidence for the facts described can be produced at any time, on request.

Arbitrary arrests of Germans have taken place in all parts of the severed territory up to most recent times. Occasionally arbitrary reasons are given, which afterwards prove unfounded. In several cases the person concerned was given no reason whatsoever for his arrest. A hearing of the case is frequently held only after a considerable period of imprisonment.

In various cases Germans thus arrested without evident reason were removed from their native region; their relatives were given no information regarding their whereabouts, so that they were unable to make enquiries.

The treatment of the arrested persons often leaves much to be desired. Complaints have been received regarding accommodation in quarters unfit for human habitation, as well as overcrowding of such quarters, insufficient ventilation and heating, insufficient food and a complete lack of exercise. The fact that the arrested persons are often confined with rogues and criminals of the worst sort has aroused public indignation, the more so since the former are for the most part respected citizens, officials, clergy and leading business men.

The prisoners are exposed without redress to abuse, ill-treatment, robbery and extortion on the part of subordinate members of the prison personnel or on the part of the soldiery.

In several cases the arrest and the ill-treatment connected with it have attained their end, the displacement of the person concerned from his position, and have rendered him amenable to the sale of his property.

Although the Polish Government solemnly pledged themselves not to call up men of German extraction for military service before they had had an opportunity of exercising their right of option, a roll-call has been held in several districts. Consequently, Germans who did not wish to enlist with the Polish Army were forced to make a premature declaration with regard to their option. In numerous cases the Germans concerned were subjected to abuse and ill-treatment. In several instances men with the right to exercise their option were enlisted in the Polish Army, although they declared that they wished to choose German nationality. In many districts those who had chosen German nationality were expelled from the country for that reason. Cases of assault and robbery also took place on such occasions. Such instances of restriction in the privilege to exercise an option have been repeated in the most recent past, despite the fact that the Polish Government have meantime issued instructions that this abuse should cease.

Travellers crossing the Polish Corridor are frequently arrested, even on through trains, on the alleged grounds that they have passed seditious remarks about the Polish State or on account of some irregularity during the passport examination, and are detained without reason for an excessively long period and subjected to indignities. In certain cases these travellers have been abused, ill-treated and robbed of their property.

Germans who have remained in Poland fare no better. There are numerous reports of abuse. Little consideration is shown for the natural sentiments of the German minority. Monuments which were sacred and dear to the old-established population were defiled and damaged in Thorn and other towns; Germans are forced by threats to sing Polish songs; persons under arrest have to report as "German swine" upon inspection of the cells; persons who have just chosen to retain their German nationality are forced to cry "Long live Poland!"; Protestants are forced to state, instead of their religious confession, that they are "mad". Much bitterness was caused by the physical examination of highly respected women and girls which took place in Soldau after the withdrawal of the Bolshevists. Robbery and ill-treatment of Germans are the order of the day. Polish officials tolerate such acts of violence without making any attempt to interfere.

In certain cases the fact that Germans are subjected to persecution because they are Germans is openly admitted in official quarters. Thus the district commissioner in Argenau threatened a farmer who chose German nationality by telling him that his father, a one-armed invalid whom he was leaving behind him in Poland, would not be allowed to remain much longer in possession of his establishment.

At the end of August the *Starosta* at Putzig declared an aggravated state of siege, because the majority of the men of military age residing there had declared that they preferred to retain their German nationality. He further ordained that all resident Germans must exercise their option before the end of September of the current year, otherwise they would immediately be called up for military service. Those who chose German nationality would have to leave the country within twelve months.

The *Starosta* at Graetz recently gathered all the Germans residing in the town together in a hall and forced them, in face of soldiers pointing fixed bayonets, to sign a telegram written by him and intended for the German Government protesting against the alleged oppression of Polish residents in Germany.

The *Starosta* at Kulm is systematically carrying on anti-German agitation by holding public meetings in the Kulm market-place and inciting the crowd against Germans. Among other things he declared at one of these meetings that if any German dared to say anything against the Polish State, he should be bound with cords and dragged through the streets to the Starosta's office or before the court. At the end of August, he summarily expelled all German nationals and those who, exercising

their option, had chosen to retain their German nationality and subjected them to the cruelest of treatments at their departure. Arbitrary arrests carried out by his orders caused much alarm and bitterness among the German population.

In a whole series of cases Germans have been murdered by Poles. Some of these crimes have not as yet been expiated. In other cases the investigation demanded has so far not been carried out.

Frontier guards have, in many cases, crossed the German frontier and made illegal use of their arms on German soil. In order to avoid punishment, they have in several cases even conveyed corpses to Polish territory. In most cases the circumstances were such that the use of arms was not justified at all.

The foregoing summary provides overwhelming proof that at present Germans in Poland by no means enjoy the equality of rights solemnly promised them. On the the contrary, they are treated practically everywhere as outlaws. . . . . .

No. 6 Speech Made by German National Delegate Spickermann, January 23, 1923*

Extract

(Translation)

Members of the Sejm! I have the honor to make the following declaration in the name of the German Members:

. . . . . We regret to state that in his exposé the Premier used a term which would almost make it appear as though he, too, had become infected by the chauvinistic poison which is being spread abroad day in, day out. It was in our opinion, with premeditation that he introduced his remarks concerning the minorities in Poland with the statement: "Poland is a National State!" That was a fatal phrase. It is this way of thinking which has led the great majority of our Polish fellow-countrymen to come to the conclusion: "Well, then, persons of foreign extractions have nothing to seek here; they are merely (and this has been repeated with a thousand variations) tolerated as guests. If they presume to be more, they must be crowded out of the country." We have suffered long enough from the intolerable situation created by such arguments. The whole machinery of administration within the country has been actuated by the principle that everything possible must be done to drive Polish citizens of German extraction out of the country, to de-Germanize the country or, as it is often so tastefully put, to purify it. The most brutal means are permissible in order to attain this end. Even the legislative assembly of the Sejm has not been ashamed of allowing itself to be guided by such

* Speech made, in the name of the German Members, during a debate on a Government declaration made by M. Sikorski, the Polish Premier.

principles in executing its legislative duties. It has thereby fundamentally shaken the sense of right and wrong in every section of the population. If the law permits a German, merely because he is a German, to be ousted from his property in a manner which deprives him of his entire fortune and leaves him no other course but to emigrate abroad as a penniless refugee, then the man in the street is not to blame if he loses his sense of the inviolability of property. It is not to be wondered at if the moral sense of even the upper classes has been severely shaken.

It is perhaps not going too far if we regard the classification of Polish citizens, which is based on the erroneous conception of a National State, as the very root of all evil in every sphere of State administration; and as not the least of the reasons why the confidence of foreign countries in our economic activities has to a great extent disappeared. It is today regarded as a matter of course, even by the highest authorities, that tenders and estimates submitted by German industrial enterprises have no chance of being considered whenever they compete with Polish enterprises. When it is regarded as a patriotic duty to get rid of the most outstanding and experienced directors of industrial concerns and ruthlessly weed out the German partners in leading companies, when any and every means is permissible to force German tradesmen and German factory owners to hand over their business to Poles, are not such measures bound to lead to an upheaval of our whole economic life, to a decline in the productivity of our industrial and commercial concerns and consequently in their taxable capacity, and to the forfeiture of the confidence placed in us by our long-standing business friends abroad? . . . . .

It will be no easy matter to cauterize all the festering sores which the poison of national chauvinism has caused to appear on the body of the community; nor will it suffice to fight the external symptoms of the disease, if at the same time the cause of the trouble, the poison acting in secret, is not done away with. It is therefore imperative that a simple and straightforward answer should be given to the question: Is Poland a National State or is it a State of nationalities?

Perhaps we should not have attached such marked importance to the Premier's statement that Poland is a National State, had not the Premier in immediate conjunction with this statement circumscribed the special rights of the minorities too closely by asserting that they were free to practise their own form of religion and use their own national language. That is not the kernel of the matter! For us Germans in Poland the question of a distinctive religious denomination scarcely arises since, on the one hand, we Germans belong to various religious communities, while on the other we and our Polish fellow-citizens belong to the same religious communities which make no distinction as regards to nationality. That the episcopates of the largest religious communities consider it compatible with their teaching of Christian doctrine to prevail upon the Germans in their charge to renounce their allegiance to the German

nation, and that national chauvinism has penetrated into the offices of the Polish clergy of both communities and even into the pulpits, is another story.

Similarly, the use of our German mother-tongue is hardly a matter for state control. Though it is indeed outrageous that Polish chauvinists still consider themselves authorized to violate the secrecy of the postal service by opening and checking our correspondence without any legal authority, and it is most regrettable that it is still considered necessary to surround us with spies and informers. But let that pass! We have nothing to hide. Those who are interested in our family life are at liberty to look into our private affairs. But as yet no one has gone so far as to try to prevent us from using our mother-tongue in our own homes.

If, however, the Premier understands by free use of our mother-tongue a right extending beyond the limits of our private lives and applying to public life, then we beg that this right may be given practical form.

In the western voivodeships we have been practically driven out of all communal bodies on the allegation that our knowledge of the Polish language was insufficient. In the Upper Silesian Sejm a law has just been passed prescribing the exclusive use of the Polish language at meetings even of such communal bodies as are composed mainly of Germans. And this has occurred only five months after Upper Silesia became Polish, a period so short that with the best will in the world it was impossible for Germans to master the Polish language. We are unwilling to draw comparisons with the past, but we cannot refrain from pointing out that in the Polish districts of the former province, the Polish language was recognized along with the German as an official language three generations after this province had been incorporated in the Prussian State. We should like further to point out that the Senate recently refused the use of the language of the minority even in the case of its committee meetings. The "free" use of our mother-tongue is therefore of a somewhat peculiar nature.

The greatest benefit bestowed on us, however, by the Treaty for the Protection of Minorities, which represents for us the Magna Carta of our very existence, was the possibility of retaining our national culture (*Volkstum*) even in the Polish State without being subjected to differential treatment on that account. . . . . .

Although the Treaty for the Protection of Minorities granted us special rights in cultural spheres for the preservation and cultivation of our *Volkstum,* rights which, as the Premier pointed out, are also firmly implanted in our Constitution, all these guarantees amount to nothing more than a dead letter. The Treaty for the Protection of Minorities dates from the year 1919, the Constitution from 1921. But in contravention of the rights solemnly granted by these documents, everything possible has been done during the past years, and is still being done, to do away

with the German schools. Be it that the local authorities have received instructions to this effect from the central authority, be it that they, actuated by nationalist sentiments, believed that they best interpreted the intentions of their superiors by acting contrary to official instructions, the actual result of their systematic and well-aimed work is that the German school system, once in such a flourishing condition especially in the western provinces, is now completely ruined. We have been deprived of our school grounds and of our school buildings which we and our fathers before us had built with our private means, we have continually been prevented from acquiring other buildings to be equipped as German private schools, former German teachers have been forced to leave the country since it was demanded of them that they should master the Polish Language within an exceedingly short space of time—a sheer impossibility for all those who held appointments in communes where the population was principally or entirely German. And now that we have, to the best of our ability, been training auxiliary teachers, the authorities refuse to recognize them and place obstacles in the way of fully trained German teachers seeking appointment. Finally, fully qualified teachers of German nationality are prohibited from teaching even in private German schools. Over and above this, there are the well-known machinations by which ancient school-systems are divided into several districts, so that the number of school children is reduced to below 40, the minimum enrollment for public schools.

This then is the truth concerning the freedom to preserve our own culture and the care of the State for the German school-system.

We hope, Sir, that a change will now take place. A clean sweep will have to be made before a change can be effected—nothing less than a thorough alteration of the entire system. If *starostas,* police officials and school teachers are allowed to remain in the *Okazist* League—a nationalist league which has made the de-Germanization of the country its supreme aim—then it is out of the question that the Premier's intentions, which may deviate from this, can possibly be realized. . . . .

No. 7 The German Consul-General in Posen to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, April 12, 1923

On the 10th inst. General Sikorski, the Premier, arrived in Posen and took residence at the castle.

Even before General Sikorski's arrival the purpose of his visit to Posen was the subject of lively discussion in the local press. The *Kurjer*

Pozmanski connects the Premier's visit with the West Marches policy. "General Sikorski," writes the *Kurjer,* "wants to secure the sympathy of the nationalist camp by advancing the de-Germanization of the West Marches in accordance with the demands of the population of Greater Poland and Pomerellen." The *Dziennik Pozmanski* declares that presumably the Premier's visit to Posen will contribute to the solution of burning questions including that of the liquidation of German estates.

After the Premier had received a number of persons in audience, he was given a ceremonious reception in the evening in the Town Hall. He was greeted by M. Ratajski, the Mayor *(Stadtpräsident),* with an address in which Ratajski emphasized that the German peril did not exist only at the frontiers but also in the interior of the country. This peril would remain until all German-owned property was in Polish hands and until the enemy was no longer gratuitously nourished within their own country. Furthermore, Greater Poland could, he said, no longer permit every German interloper to possess some 10 Morgen more land than a Polish citizen.

The tone adopted by Mayor (Stadtpräsident) Ratajski was taken up by Sikorski in his reply. I respectfully enclose a clipping from the *Posener Neueste Nachrichten,* the contents of which coincide with reports of the speech appearing in the Polish press. The speech made a great impression here and has caused much alarm and depression in German circles. A reply from the German side appears to me to be a matter of urgent necessity, in order to restrain German residents here from hasty emigration *en masse.*

The question of liquidation is treated particularly severely in the speech. It was stated that within a year at the latest the Government would ruthlessly carry out the liquidation of German estates and the de-Germanization of the western voivodeships. Moreover the sharp tone which he employed when speaking of the Free City of Danzig was striking. "Danzig is only a free city and its entire future depends on Poland. The Polish Government do not intend to continue to show the same leniency as hitherto."

At the press conference M. Sikorski once more dealt in detail with the question of liquidation and gave his assurance that the Government would grant material assistance in the form of long-term credits for the liquidation of German estates which must be carried out without delay.

General Sikorski left Posen on the 11th inst.

Stobbe

Enclosure

Extract from the "Posener Neueste Nachrichten" of April 12, 1923

(Translation)

M. Sikorski, the Premier, made the following speech on the occasion of the official reception in the Town Hall:

". . . . . It is to the immediate interest of the minority that this historic process which is called de-Germanization of the western voivodeships, and which is carried out after long-continued oppression by the Prussian Government, should be carried out as soon and as rapidly as possible. Perfectly excusable mistakes have, indeed, been made in this connection. As long as Poland was not yet recognized as an international factor she could not risk administering elementary justice, as every judiciary act on international territory was impeded as an act of violence.

The stronger is always right, and the weaker is considered defeated and thrust into the background. I hereby state that on the eve of the liquidation of German estates, to which you, Mr. Mayor, referred, our previous leniency and irresolution will have to undergo a radical change. The Government which I represent are determined to settle this question certainly within a year.

Those who, at a time when our country was in danger, exercised their option in favor of a foreign Power must now bear the consequences of their choice. The sooner this matter is settled, the sooner will the consolidation of conditions essential for domestic peace come about.

As regards the German colonists, the de-Germanization of the towns and the liquidation of the industrial enterprises in question, I declare emphatically that, anyone who accuses us before the world of lack of humanity, is not rightly representing the actual facts. Poland is and always has been humane, and it is even possible that too much humanity has more than once exposed our State to various dangers . . . . ."

Immediately after the reception in the Town Hall, a press conference, which was attended by representatives of practically every newspaper in Posen, was held in the Mayor's office. At this meeting the Premier imparted information on the status of the liquidation.

As regards those who had exercised their option in favor of Germany General Sikorski said that the Government had taken over the whole question in a very complicated state. Speaking of the colonists, the Premier said that the present policy of speedy liquidation would be continued and that it was to the interests of the settlers themselves that liquidation should be carried out with all possible despatch. The expulsion of the 160,000 who preferred Germany would strengthen the Polish element in Posen and in Pomerellen.

No. 8 The State Secretary at the German Foreign Office to the Polish Minister

(Translation)

Berlin, July 18, 1923

Mr. Minister:

I have the honor to reply as follows to the note, dated June 16 of this year, No. 3630/23:*

Since the time when several former Prussian provinces were transferred to the Polish Republic, far more than half a million Germans, the majority of whom had long settled there, have left those districts. The circumstances attending this emigration which frequently meant impoverishment and want for those concerned, prove that it was in most cases not undertaken voluntarily. In a speech made in the Town Hall in Posen on April 10 of this year,** M. Sikorski, formerly Polish Premier, unequivocally stated that the de-Germanization of the western provinces of Poland was being carried out systematically and that it represented a political aim furthered not only by Polish nationalist parties but also by all Polish official bodies, including the very highest.

The attitude of the lower authorities in Poland corresponds to this principle. This statement from an authoritative source, coupled with the action of the subordinate authorities, could not fail to create the impression in Germany that the tolerance of the Polish Government mentioned in the Note of June 16 did not apply to the German minority in Poland.

The German Government permit themselves moreover to point out that the action of the Polish Government is also not in accordance with existing treaties nor with the general principles of international law. The Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague will shortly give an advisory opinion as to the legitimacy of an important point in recent Polish action. The German Government, however, regret to state that, although negotiations regarding the settlement of nationality questions have been going on for some months in Dresden, the Polish authorities continue to order expulsion and actually proceed to liquidate property even when it is disputable whether the person concerned is of German or of Polish nationality. This method leads one to assume that the general aim is to arrive at a *fait accompli* even in disputable cases merely in order to carry out the process of de-Germanization as rapidly as possible. And it was this method, no doubt, which caused the Prussian Premier to speak as he did.

The Foreign Office further begs to contradict emphatically the opinion expressed in the Note of June 16, that the Prussian Premier's remarks

* In this Note the Polish Minister protested against a statement made by the Prussian Premier in the Prussian Diet on June 9, in which he remonstrated against the Polish minorities policy.

** Cf. No. 7.

were the outcome of a *conviction hostile* or an *agressivité évidente.* If unfavorable criticism of Poland is heard anywhere in Germany, it is invariably a reaction to Polish manifestations and measures. In this connection the Foreign Office ventures to call to mind that M. Seyda, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his *exposé* to the Senate Committee for Foreign Affairs on June 8, i. e., immediately prior to the Prussian Premier's speech, made statements with regard to Germany which could not fail to cause a violent echo. Moreover, M. Wojciechowski, the Polish President, made a speech in Kattowitz on June 19 in which German culture was designated as perfidious and Germany decried as a state in which might triumphed over right. Reference may likewise be made in this connection to numerous statements, written and verbal, made by leading Polish politicians, in which even the fact that East Prussia continues to be German is described as a danger to Poland. In all these allegations there is definite evidence of an aggressive and hostile spirit which is entirely absent in the occasional German criticisms of Poland's de-Germanization policy.

Responsible quarters of the German Reich are anxious to establish neighborly relations with Poland and eliminate existing causes of friction between the two countries. The coincidental devaluation of the German and the Polish currencies has recently proved anew, how intimately the two States are connected economically, and how much it is in the interests of both to establish correct relations. The German Government take this opportunity of stating that no step has been taken by them which could in any way prove an obstacle to the development of such relations between the two States. If incidents of the kind now under discussion nevertheless occur, they are in the opinion of the Foreign Office merely the result of Polish manifestations and measures which cannot fail to be interpreted in all German circles as being specially directed against Germany.

I avail myself of this opportunity . . . . .

Frhr. von Maltzan

No. 9 Advisory Opinion No. 6 Given by the Permanent Court of International Justice September 10, 1923*

Extract

The Council of the League of Nations on February 3, 1923, adopted the following Resolution:

* The German minority attempted time and again to obtain its lawful rights by appealing to the international bodies established for its protection by international treaties. No less than 154 petitions on the subject of the position of the German minority in Poland have been submitted to the League of Nations. Apart from handling thousands of complaints without a formal decision being made by the President, the Mixed Commission for Upper Silesia dealt with 90 German complaints of which 75 were recognized as justified. The number of complaints received from Polish parties amounted to 35, of which only 12 were recognized as justified.

"The Council of the League of Nations having been apprised of certain questions regarding the following facts:

a) A number of colonists who were formerly German nationals, and who are now domiciled in Polish territory previously belonging to Germany, have acquired Polish nationality, particularly in virtue of Article 91 of the Treaty of Versailles. They are occupying their holdings under contracts *(Rentengutsverträge)* which although concluded with the German Colonization Commission prior to the Armistice of November 11th, 1918, did not receive an *Auflassung* before that date. The Polish Government regards itself as the legitimate owner of these holdings under Article 256 of the Treaty of Versailles, and considers itself entitled to cancel the above contracts. In consequence, the Polish authorities have taken certain measures in regard to these colonists by which the latter will be expelled from the holdings which they occupy;

b) The Polish authorities will not recognize leases conceded before November 11th, 1918, by the German Government to German nationals who have now become Polish subjects. These are leases over German State properties which have subsequently been transferred to the Polish State in virtue of the Treaty of Versailles, in particular of Article 256.

Requests the Permanent Court of International Justice to give an advisory opinion on the following questions:

1. Do the points referred to in *a*) and *b*) above involve international obligations of the kind contemplated by the Treaty between the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan and Poland, signed at Versailles on June 28th, 1919, and do these points come within the competence of the League of Nations as defined in that Treaty?

2. Should the first question be answered in the affirmative the Council requests the Court to give an advisory opinion on the question whether the position adopted by the Polish Government, and referred to in *a*) and *b*) above, is in conformity with its international obligations."

. . . . . The Court is of opinion,

That the points referred to in *a*) and *b*) of the Resolution of the Council of the League of Nations of February 3rd, 1923, do involve international obligations of the kind contemplated by the Treaty between the United States of America, the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan and Poland, signed at Versailles on June 28th, 1919, and that these points come within the competence of the League of Nations as defined in that Treaty;

That the position adopted by the Polish Government, and referred to in *a*) and *b*) of the said Resolution was not in conformity with its international obligations . . . . .*

Loder
President

A. Hammarskjöld
Registrar

No. 10 The German Consul-General in Posen to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, September 25, 1931

Even Polish quarters now admit with almost cynical frankness that the process of de-Germanization has made considerable progress during the last few years. The question has come up in the local press in consequence of a publication in which the problem of German emigration is discussed. The publication in question deals with an investigation carried out by the Warsaw Institute for Research into Minorities Questions, which appeared in a journal entitled "Minorities Questions" (Nos. 1, 2 and 3). The inquiry has shown that approximately 1,000,000 Germans emigrated up to 1931.

Although this figure is lower than our estimates, it is noteworthy that even Polish quarters admit that their policy of de-Germanization has resulted in such high emigration figures.

Lütgens

No. 11 Debate in the House of Lords, June 15, 1932

Extract

Lord Noel-Buxton: At recent meetings of the Council of the League of Nations, important questions affecting national minorities have been dealt with, and notably at the January Council when the noble Viscount, Lord Cecil, represented the British Government, a report was dealt with on the terrorization, as it was called, which took place in the Ukraine

* Particularly noteworthy for the motivation of the Advisory Opinion is the following passage:

"The effect of the enforcement of the law of July 14, 1920, would be to eradicate what had previously been done, so far as de-Germanization would result from requiring the settlers in question to abandon their homes. But, although such a measure may be comprehensible, it is precisely what the Minorities Treaty was intended to prevent. The intention of this Treaty was no doubt to eliminate a dangerous source of oppression, recrimination and dispute to prevent racial and religious hatreds from having free play and to protect the situations established upon its conclusion, by placing existing minorities under the impartial protection of the League of Nations."

in the autumn of 1930. That incident was the subject of a petition by no fewer than sixty-five Members of the British Parliament, and that fact indicated the public interest that is felt in a statement by His Majesty's Government on their action in regard to the question of minorities.

It is a question which forms a potent factor in international relations. In the debate on this subject last year all three speakers, each of whom had vast experience in the matter, insisted on its importance, and that importance is all the greater in a time of tension like the present. It is a main cause of friction between certain Powers, and where there is extreme friction the danger of incidents resulting in disaster must be taken into account. An illustration lies in the case of Danzig. Everyone knows what anxiety attaches to that. The German newspapers and the French newspapers have been full of it, the Germans prophesying a Polish occupation, and the French prophesying a German *putsch*. Lord D'Abernon recently described the situation in Danzig, and spoke of the corridor as the powder magazine of Europe. I have seen myself in Danzig the kind of difficulties which may lead at any moment to a dangerous incident. There is trouble both on the German and the Polish side, and it has more than once led to brawls which have resulted in loss of life. Quite lately the Polish Commissioner threatened resignation if the League Commissioner did not call in Polish troops. The aggravation which leads to this very dangerous situation arises in the main from the treatment of the German population in Polish territory, and the vitiating effect of all this has its reaction even on the Disarmament Conference, because the whole ground-work of contended populations is in peril.

Another deplorable result is that a demand for the revision of frontiers is stimulated on every hand, and we gradually get the European States divided into two camps. We have Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria, and, closely associated with them, Italy, facing the camp which includes Poland and the States of the Little Entente, and this deplorable unrest can be assuaged by the just treatment of minorities. The Treaties affecting minorities were, of course, designed to avoid this friction which the Allies saw to be otherwise unavoidable. The difficulty of the situation was admittedly grave. We had at least 26,000,000 of minorities—some experts would put it much higher—and former subordinates were put in control of their former masters, very often masters of a higher civilization than themselves; but, after twelve years, harmony ought to be much easier than it has proved. The migrations are mainly over; agrarian reforms are completed, and the populations have settled down in a way that ought to facilitate harmony; but the Allies saw that alien domination necessitated safeguards of a strict kind. Frontiers on definitely ethnic lines were impossible, and therefore political unity could only be brought about through cultural diversity. Accordingly the new States were set up by the agency of the Allies, subject to conditions.

The Treaties affecting minorities laid it down that there should be, firstly, equality before the law—and a sample of that is in the denial of the prohibition of prejudice in regard to public employment—and, secondly, cultural rights, especially the right to primary schools in the minority language, the right to social institutions, and the right to the use of the minority language in the Courts. The execution of the Treaties was specially the subject of guarantee by the League. The question of guarantee, of course, is admittedly difficult, but let us recall the terms in which it was established. The Treaties say that the obligations of international concern are under the guarantee of the League, and the guarantee was defined by the Council in 1920 by the adoption of the Tittoni Report, which said that the guarantee meant that the League must ascertain that the provisions for the protection of minorities were always observed. A breach of specific guarantees of that kind adds to the danger of its non-fulfilment. Again, the action of Mr. Arthur Henderson, when Foreign Secretary, led to hopes of the fulfilment of the guarantee, which decreased the danger, and it will be all to the good if that decrease can continue.

I would like to make a suggestion which I hope His Majesty's Government will view favorably. It is that, following the precedent of the White Paper issued on the suggestion of the League lately in connection with the Sino-Japanese events of last winter, the Government should issue a White Paper to set out for the use of Parliament an outline of the procedure, the powers and responsibilities of members of the Council in regard to minorities, and the nature of the guarantee assumed by the League in regard to the execution of the Treaties. How are these Treaties worked? Czechoslovakia is a fairly happy exception to the general regrettable rule. Others have a bad record. We see nationalism unchecked by prudence. Assimilation by the destruction of cultures is the order of the day. That was foreseen by the League and intended to be provided for, but it is still going on. The forms of oppression are similar, although they differ in degree. We have the suppression of schools, we have the suppression of political rights, and in an otherwise melancholy subject one source of humor is provided in the method by which political rights are suppressed—that is, the plan of denying the people the exercise of the suffrage by the brilliant invention of filling the ballot boxes with rubbish so that it is impossible to insert the ballot papers. Agricultural regulations have also been used to prevent the populations of unfavorable villages from getting to the poll by the issue of foot-and-mouth disease orders, which, as your Lordships know, on the Continent, often preclude the movement of human beings as well as of animals. There is also the other more simple method of the flogging of voters on the way to the poll, which is more serious and which was proved to have been used in the case of the elections in Upper Silesia.

Then there is widespread discrimination against minorities in regard to public appointments. I should like to give your Lordships two or three examples from actual cases. . . . . .

. . . . . The Allies expected great things of Poland, of a race with a great history, renowned in art and science, a race which should be—and let us hope will be—an example of wisdom to newer civilization in her neighborhood. But the policy of Poland, we must admit, has, up to now, in this matter been injurious to herself. The case of the German population is a very urgent matter. From the corridor and from Posen no fewer than a million Germans have already left the country since the annexation owing to conditions which they find intolerable. The dependence of any person requiring a licence for a public position on the favor of local authorities is used to get rid of large sections of the people. Colonization, which is the subject of discussion by the Council even today, is used to discriminate against minorities. The schools exhibit a figure which your Lordships will find it difficult to credit. Forty-five percent of the German children in Thorn and in Posen have been deprived of schools and driven to Polish schools. There has been a reduction of 50 percent in the actual number of schools. That is a direct infraction of the clause of the Treaty with Poland which lays it down that:

> "Poland will provide . . . . . that in the primary schools the instruction shall be given to the children . . . . . through the medium of their own language."

A very curious and interesting example has just come to my knowledge, for the truth of which I can vouch, in the treatment of the Protestant Sunday schools. They apparently have a system very much like the English system, the teachers not being professional, and there has been a deliberate attack on the whole system of Sunday schools. Police break in; they lock up the teachers; they interrogate the children while the teachers are in an adjoining room under lock and key; they take the books. This is persecution of a mean kind and is apparently part of an attempt to suppress the use of the language, as far as it can be suppressed, by actually diminishing the extent to which the people know how to read it and write it. They may still, of course, use it in their houses, but it is an attempt to suppress the language. There are more serious things still in the Ukrainian part of Poland. The Ukraine sounds remote from us, but it concerns all the world, because this is really a matter relevant to the interests of peace. The Ukrainians are a much greater race than we are accustomed to remember. There are 6,000,000 of them in Poland, and they are the largest section of the population in Canada apart from the British and French. Therefore, they are in a high degree a British concern. In the East Galician part of Poland, in the period between the end of the War and 1928, the primary schools were reduced in number

by about two-thirds—from 2,400 down to 745. In Universities, where under Austrian rule the Ukrainians had eleven professorships, they have now none, whereas they were promised a University of their own in 1922 by the Polish Government. In the part of Polish Ukrainia which was formerly in Russia, in Volhynia, the conditions are harsher still. There is a great system of colonization by ex-soldiers, and these men—armed and not averse to lawlessness—persecute their neighbors in a highly regrettable manner. There is a system of suppression of the co-operative stores which are a feature of Ukranian farming, and all this, I suppose, is part of the policy of keeping the peasants uninformed and disunited. There is also throughout the Ukraine a system of police certificates for anyone requiring a licence of any kind, which leads to a general system of police persecution. An unfavorable report by the police naturally settles the fate of a schoolmaster who does not carry favor with them. You cannot ignore in this connection one especially deplorable matter—that is the torture of prisoners in the prisons and of suspects who have incurred the disfavor of the Polish authorities. I regret that the evidence is convincing that mediaeval torture is practised in these cases.

The allegations were described at the Council by the noble Viscount, Lord Cecil, who was a delegate of the British Government, as shocking to the conscience of mankind. They were not enquired into as they ought to have been by the Council. The report was adopted without enquiry having taken place. They are relevant to the question of minorities which was the subject of the Council's report in January. That terrorization was sufficiently known from the report, but I will remind your Lordships of its nature by reading the words of a distinguished lawyer who has served the Crown in the Colonies, Sir Walter Napier, who wrote as follows:

> "The villagers' leaders were rounded up, driven into some barn, stripped, held down and beaten with the thick sticks used for threshing. Doctors were forbidden to go from the towns to the villages, and peasants attempting to come to the towns for treatment were turned back by the police."

It is very repugnant to criticize a friendly State; but nothing is gained, as has been shown by discussion at the Council, by ignoring breaches of Treaties when those breaches are remediable. We must not forget that Poland has a very special cause to observe these Treaties because the annexations granted her were granted on condition that she gave autonomy to these very districts. That was laid down by the Ambassadors' Conference in 1923 of which our own country was a leading member. . . . . .

Lord Dickinson: I hope you will allow me to add a few observations to those offered to you by my noble friend Lord Noel-Buxton, and at

the same time to thank him for bringing the matter before this House. It may sometimes be wondered why one feels justified in asking your Lordships to give consideration to this problem, but I think I can mention two facts which certainly in my opinion justify your Lordships in devoting a few minutes of your time to this matter. In the first place the problem is one of considerable magnitude—much greater magnitude than one usually thinks—because in each country there are certain minorities, some numerous and some small. They are, of course, as their name conveys, in a minority, very often a small minority, but the aggregate number of persons who live under the Minority Treaty conditions is considerable. It is difficult to give the figure. It is stated variously as 20,000,000, 30,000,000, 40,000,000 and even 50,000,000, by people who wish to make little or much of their argument; but I think one is fairly within the mark in saying that there are at least 30,000,000 persons who are concerned in the proper administration of the Minority Treaties throughout Europe. And certainly if anyone is responsible for the Minority Treaties it is the British Government.

At Paris, as Lord Cecil of Chelwood will remember well, the question was considered at considerable length, and it was not very easy to obtain the passage of the Minority Treaties at all. I was not there, but I have been informed that had it not been for the insistence of the representatives of this country, the Minority Treaties might never have come into existence. If that is so, it seems to me that His Majesty's Government, and their representatives in Geneva, have a peculiar share of responsibility in seeing that these Treaties are made effective.

I do not propose to deal with the question of Poland, which was mentioned by my noble friend, firstly, because I rather avoid reference to any particular nation in this respect in the observations that I am going to submit, and secondly, because I have always realized that in Poland particularly and in all these countries they have had political difficulties in forming their Governments which we find it hard to estimate. Nevertheless, we are brought up against the situation rather abruptly by the events in Ukraine and the way the minority have been treated by the Polish Government and the League of Nations. My interest in this matter dates from the time of the War. I have not the advantage of knowing the East as well as my noble friend has, but immediately after the War I did visit those countries interested particularly in minorities, and it was evident to anyone who went there at that time that there was a problem upon which the whole peace of Europe, and perhaps of the world, would depend. Upon the proper solution of the relations of these minorities to their surrounding populations depended, and I believe still depends, the future peace of Europe.

In all these countries you find great groups of persons who differ from their neighbors in almost every respect—one might say in every respect. They differ in their language, in their religion, in their cultural associa-

tions, in their conditions and history and in every particular from the persons who surround them, and, as your Lordships know very well, they have always been the cause of a great deal of trouble in the East of Europe. The War changed this in two respects. In the first place it liberated a very large number of persons held to have been under the yoke of foreign rulers. It liberated a greater number than it subjugated in their turn after the War and to that extent the War was a war of liberation; but on the other hand it did subjugate to new allegiances many millions of persons, and these were, as a rule, persons who, if not superior to their neighbors, certainly thought themselves to be so. Instead of the Rumanians being subjected to the Hungarians and the Poles to the Germans and the Czechs to the Austrians, the Germans became subordinated in one respect and the Hungarians and Austrians in another, and it was perfectly evident that in those circumstances nothing could bring conciliation to Europe except a very generous exercise of the rights of Governments over these people.

. . . . . It is because these minorities have their Treaty rights that the whole question assumes the importance which it does, and it is because they think that they are denied these rights that we find this feeling amongst minorities that they cannot get redress from the international organ, the League of Nations, which was established for the very purpose of doing them justice. The result is that, instead of looking to the League of Nations for redress and justice, they look elsewhere. They are now looking, not to us, but to Germany, for the German representatives on the League of Nations have become the protagonists of the minorities. Germany had nothing to do with the drawing up of the Minority Treaties. Germany objected herself to accept the obligations of the Treaties when she came into the League. Now if anybody raises a question in the Assembly or Council it is the German representative who takes the leading part. It seems to be a great mistake on the part of our Government to allow that situation to grow up. The rights of minorities are something which the British public have always interested themselves in, and I should be glad if we could see more active steps taken by our representatives in this particular direction. . . . . .

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood: I am sure none of your Lordships will think that any apology was needed from my noble friend Lord Dickinson for giving so interesting an account of this very important question. He certainly was fully justified in saying that there is a historical connection between this country and the minorities question. He referred to what happened at the Paris Conference. He might have gone very much further back than that. If he refers to the records of the Berlin Conference, which resulted in the Treaty of Berlin, he will find that the British Foreign Minister of that day was part author, I think, with the French Foreign Minister of the general proposition that wherever a

country received a substantial increase of territory by Treaty there ought to be put upon that country the duty of protecting its minorities.

. . . . . Undoubtedly this matter is of very great importance. The question of minorities is responsible for a great deal of the unrest which unhappily still exists, particularly in Central Europe. I think, however, that it is only fair to add that the question is one of the very greatest delicacy and difficulty. There is not the slightest doubt that there are always, as my noble friend Lord Noel-Buxton said, two sides to every minority dispute. On the one side there is the desire of the majority country to unify its territory and its population, to strengthen its position and in the often abused name of patriotism to try to stamp out all opposition that may exist to that unity. On the other side you have the very natural feeling, the very laudable feeling if you like, of the minority that it ought to maintain its separate existence inside the State. It values immensely its connection with its old nationality probably, and it has a very strong sentimental desire--I do not use the word sentimental in any derogatory sense—to maintain its position. It is obvious that when these two tendencies clash there will be a position of very great difficulty and very great delicacy.

. . . . . My noble friend, Lord Noel-Buxton, said that in some respects this minority question was a powder magazine, and I agree with him. It is full of explosive material. He cited as an instance the case of Danzig; but I think he would agree that that is not a typical minority question, though there is a position there of grave difficulty which has occupied a great part of the attention of the League of Nations. You have there a State which is predominantly German in a country which is predominantly Polish and the clash of two nationalities who are apparently almost always inimical to one another when brought together. In my judgment it is not a typical minority case because it does not come within the Minority Treaties. It is a case of two apparently irreconcilable sections of people placed together in a certain position by the operation of the Treaties.

. . . . . In these matters your first business should be to try to convince the Government concerned that they ought to behave better and ought to give some guarantee of better behavior. To take the case he had in view, of Poland and the Ukraine, the delay was caused in that case, I understood, by efforts made to induce the Polish Government to give some kind of guarantee, some statement that they were going to institute a new system, which would remove the difficulties. That must take time. It is not a question of machinery, or of getting a Committee together, but it is a question of the difficulty of carrying on delicate negotiations with rapidity. . . . . .

The Secretary of State for War (Viscount Hailsham): . . . . . As regards the Ukrainians, I know that I need not remind the noble Lord that

the whole question of the position of this minority has been before the Council of the League this year as a result of the so-called pacification of the Polish Ukrainian provinces in 1930. Petitions against the action of the Polish authorities in that matter were considered last year by a Committee of Three, of which the British representative, who, I think, was my noble friend Lord Cecil, was a member. That Committee found that there was a *prima facie* case against the Polish Government for violation of the Minority Treaties. The report on that subject was presented to the Council on January 30 last, by Mr. Sato of the Japanese delegation, and that report took the view that the Polish authorities had had considerable provocation, that they had no intention of pursuing a systematic anti-Ukrainian policy, and that they would henceforward maintain a conciliatory attitude and endeavor to collaborate with the responsible elements among the Ukrainians for the improvement of conditions in the Ukrainian provinces.

The noble Lord will remember also that when that report was discussed by the Council, Lord Cecil, speaking on behalf of the British Government drew the attention of his colleagues to the very regrettable nature of some of the incidents mentioned in it, stated that he shared the regret expressed by Mr. Sato that the Polish Government had not granted compensation to the innocent victims of abuses committed by their officials, and expressed the hope that the Polish Government would proceed energetically with measures of reconciliation and appeasement. He also expressed regret that allegations of ill-treatment of Ukrainian prisoners contained in the petitions were not to be investigated and reported upon, pointing out that as matters stood those who had made them could say that they had neither been refuted nor considered by the body to whom they had been addressed.

. . . . . With regard to the case of the Germans in Posen and the corridor, which the noble Lord has mentioned, the position is that until recently these petitions consisted mainly of complaints by individual members of the minority. They were prejudiced on account of their race in such matters as expropriation or preemption of their property under the law for agrarian reform or the grant or withdrawal of educational facilities, alcohol licences and the like. In most of these cases it has not been possible, on the evidence available, to question the contention of the Polish Government that the action of their authorities has been dictated by purely practical considerations, such as the undue proportion of large properties in a given area, or an excessive number of alcohol licences in a particular town, and did not constitute an infringement of any right given under the Minority Treaties. There are, however, before the Council several petitions dealing with the question of discrimination as a whole, and submitting comparative statistics intended to show a difference in the respective treatment of persons of

German and Polish race over a large area. Such statistics require very careful examination, which is now proceeding, and, until the results of that examination have been ascertained, plainly it would be impossible for His Majesty's Government to make any statement on the subject.

. . . . . We are grateful for any suggestions which can be made that would help us to bring about a more satisfactory fulfilment of the obligations undertaken by these Minority Treaties. But we are conscious also that the question of enforcing the performance of such obligations is of necessity a very delicate one. The whole question of any kind of enforcement obviously bristles with difficulties, and an unsuccessful attempt to enforce the observance of such Treaties, or an unsuccessful attempt to champion the cause of a minority, might easily do more harm to the cause of the minority itself than the quieter and less spectacular method of using influence with the Governments concerned. With every desire to see these Treaties fully observed in the letter and in the spirit, His Majesty's Government are fain to confess that as things stand at present they do not see that they could themselves do more than they have been trying to do in the past.* . . . . .

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* At public meetings of the Council of the League of Nations when petitions from the German minority in Poland were under discussion, representatives of a number of States repeatedly stressed the importance and the necessity of protecting the minorities and of refraining from all suppressive measures particularly in the interest of maintaining peace.

At the public meeting of the League Council on September 8, 1928, when a petition from the "Deutscher Volksbund", dated May 19, 1928, and concerning conditions of public security in Polish Upper Silesia, came up for discussion, M. Beelaerts van Blockland, Dutch member of the Council said:

> "He shared the confidence felt by the Rapporteur that, if necessary, suitable means would also be taken against the guilty persons, should the enquiries that had been begun and were still continuing show such measures to be necessary. While he personally accepted the report, he was firmly convinced that the Polish Government would take appropriate measures to reassure the population and thereby still further increase public confidence in the League of Nations, whose mission it was to watch over the interests of the minorities." (League of Nations, Official Journal 1928, p. 1490.)

At the public meeting of the League of Nations Council on September 26, 1928, when a petition relating to the closing of German minority schools in Polish Upper Silesia was being considered, M. Dandurand, Canadian member of the Council, in consequence of the attitude adopted by the Polish Foreign Minister, M. Zaleski, the Polish member of the Council, felt it incumbent on him to make a special appeal to the Polish Government. According to the minutes, he stated:

> "He would confine himself to formulating a request. He was ignorant of the local situation, but he was thinking of those twenty-five, or thirty-five children who would very soon be deprived of the school which they had hitherto had the right to attend." (League of Nations, Official Journal 1928, p. 1678.)

At another meeting of the League of Nations Council at Lugano on December 15, 1928, at which the discussion was confined exclusively to petitions submitted by members of the minority in those parts of Upper Silesia which had become Polish, M. Zaleski, the Polish Foreign Minister and member of the Council, declared in a long carefully prepared statement that the defense of the interests of the German minority by the Deutsche Volksbund in Kattowitz by means of petitions to the League of Nations represented an intolerable procedure. M. Briand, French Foreign Minister and at that time President of the Council, thereupon felt himself compelled to emphasize the safeguarding of minority rights as a supreme international obligation. He spoke of "the sacred cause and sacred right of minorities" and closed with giving the assurance:

> "the rights of the minorities will not be disregarded." (League of Nations, Official Journal 1929, p. 70/71.)

At a meeting of the League of Nations Council on January 24, 1931, two notes from the German Government dated November 27 and December 9, 1930, concerning the situation of the German minority in the voivodeship of Silesia (Poland), and another note from the German Government dated December 17, 1930, concerning the situation of the German minority in the voivodeships of Posen and Pomerellen (Poland) were finally considered. After a report of the Japanese Rapporteur, Yoshizawa (League of Nations, Official

No. 12 The German Consul-General in Posen to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, March 2, 1933

This year's Agrarian Reform has again deprived the Germans in Poland of valuable land, and has callously and cruelly demonstrated to the German minority what an unrelenting and well-planned attack is being made on them with the object of finally ousting and annihilating them.

This attack is carried out in two directions:

1. Against the economic basis of existence.
2. Against cultural institutions and traditions.

The double pressure thus applied aims at gradually breaking the spirit of the minority, in order to weaken their powers of resistance.

In view of the attack on their economic basis of existence the most important element is driving Germans off the land. About 70 to 80 per cent of the German population are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture. The breaking-up of German landed property thus affects not only the actual owner but also all the individual existences that depend on him. This gives us some idea of what the loss of land during the last 14 years has meant for the whole German minority.

Losses of German-owned landed property since 1919 can be tabulated as follows:

a) Direct Liquidation	153,100	hectares
b) Indirect Liquidation	159,287	"
c) Annulment	58,700	"
d) Consequences of general legal obscurity	50,000	"
e) Decree concerning re-purchase	72,718	"
f) Agrarian Reform	52,460	"
	546,265	hectares *

Journal 1931, p. 237/238) had been read and approved by the League Council, the British member of the Council, Mr. Henderson, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, pointed out the great interest shown by the public, particularly in Great Britain, for the minority problem in Upper Silesia. He then emphasized that the loyal execution of international minority obligations was vital for the maintenance of peace. The exact words, according to the minutes, were:

"He wished, however to speak rather as President of the Council than in his capacity of British representative. He need not say how happy he was that the system contemplated by the minorities treaties and by the Convention on Upper Silesia had now been so firmly upheld by the Council. That system was part of the public law of Europe and of the world. It had been recognized, when the peace treaties were made, that the loyal execution of the minorities treaties was vital for the maintenance of peace . . ." (League of Nations, Official Journal 1931, p. 238/239.)

* By 1939 this figure had increased to 685,700 hectares in consequence of more rigorous measures of Agrarian Reform.

Losses in barely 14 years thus amount to well over half a million hectares. To this must be added approximately 200,000 hectares of State property and approximately 300,000 hectares of woodland property. These losses have further weakened the situation of the German minority, as a great number of German workers and employees earned their livelihood on this property.

In all other departments of life the Polish attack is aimed directly at the economic existence of the minority. The dismissal of workers who declare that they are Germans has assumed alarming proportions. Employees of many years' standing are pushed out of their jobs without a pension or with a negligible indemnity. German artisans and tradespeople are boycotted. Doctors are taken off the panel, druggists are dispossessed of their shops, licenses for alcoholic liquor are withdrawn. Such proceedings are not governed by objective motives but simply by the consideration that those concerned are Germans clinging to their Germanism.

In the cultural sphere things look no better. German educational activities are the target of specially persistent attack. In 1924, 557 of the several thousand German schools in Posen and Pommerellen were still in existence. A further 335 of these 557 were closed by 1932,* so that now only 222 educational institutions remain which are attended by German children. But even of these only about one third can be termed real minority schools, since the instruction given in the remainder is often in the hands of teachers with an inadequate knowledge of German. Furthermore, since it is a regulation that a considerable number of the lessons in every school must be given in Polish, the German character of all the minority schools is much impaired.

German societies, associations and other cultural organizations are subject to constant oppression.

Hence the German minority see themselves threatened on all sides. The atmosphere of hatred to which the Germans are exposed shows no sign of abating and results in constantly recurring ill-treatment and persecution.

The force of this economic and moral pressure which has now lasted for 14 years has driven a large proportion of the German population—70 per cent is certainly not too high an estimate—to leave their old home. It is hardly surprising in the above-mentioned circumstances that the German desire to emigrate has not abated. Every day the German Consulate-General receives applications from members of the minority who want to return to the Reich. Recently the number of emigrants to cross the Polish frontier without permission seems to have increased very considerably. Consequently the German minority shows a further serious decline.

Lütgens

* By 1939 this number had increased to 425 schools.

No. 13 Extract from the Observations of the German Peace Delegation on the Peace Conditions, May 29, 1919*

(Translation)

. . . . The surrender of the purely German Hanseatic City of Danzig and of its equally purely German surroundings as demanded in Articles 100 to 108 is a particularly glaring contravention of all the assurances given in President Wilson's declarations. The census taken in Danzig on December 1, 1910 showed that Danzig had a negligible Polish-speaking minority of 3.5 percent, the Danziger Niederung district one of one percent, the Marienburg district one of 3 percent, and even the Danziger Höhe district one of only 11 percent. The Poles themselves do not seriously contest the fact that Danzig has always been German in character. An attempt to convert Danzig into a free city, to hand over its transportation systems and the external representation of its rights to the Polish State would call forth violent opposition and a permanent state of war in eastern Europe. The economic measures moreover are so arranged that every possible obstacle is placed in the way of traffic between Danzig and Germany—obviously with the intention of the ultimate Polonization of this purely German territory by means of economic pressure. The German Government are therefore forced to reject the intended violation of Danzig's nationality and to demand that Danzig and the surrounding territory be left to the German Reich. . . .

No. 14 Appendix B to the Decision Given by the League Commissioner in Danzig, December 6, 1921

List of Polish Authorities now in Danzig and the Suburbs

1. Diplomatic Representation of the Republic of Poland.
2. Authority for State Lands, Agriculture and Forests of the Polish Republic.
3. Polish Passport Office.
4. Office for Military Affairs.
5. Polish Telegraphic Agency (P. A. T.).
6. State Public Office for Purchase of Most Necessary Articles and Sale of Fish (P. U. Z. A. P. P.).

* Enclosure in the Note addressed by the President of the German Peace Delegation at Versailles to the President of the Versailles Conference, dated May 29, 1919.

7. Office for Finance and Customs.
8. Polish Foreign Trade Office.
9. Branch Office of the Polish Public Office for Export of Wood.
10. Branch Office of the Polish State Naphtha Department.
11. Polish Supply Department.
12. Polish Re-immigration Camp.
13. Polish Postal Administration.
14. Polish-American Postal Forwarding Department.
15. Polish Post Office (forwarding) Danzig-Neufahrwasser.
16. Polish Administration Department.
17. Polish Railway Administration for Construction Inspection.
18. Polish Marine Administration for Construction Inspection.
19. Polish Railway Management.
20. Polish Residence of Director, Railway Lines.
21. Polish Marine Wireless Station.
22. Polish Marine Meteorological Observatory.
23. Office for Polish State Shipping.
24. Polish Administration of Property, etc. Military Representation.

No. 15 Decision Given by the League Commissioner in Danzig, February 2, 1925*

Extract

. . . . . The following is my decision in this case.

(*a*) The post, telegraph and telephone service which the Polish Government has the right to establish under Articles 29 and 30 of the Treaty of Paris means one office in the Port of Danzig. This office is that allotted to the Polish Postal Administration in the Heveliusplatz.

(*b*) Communications by this service from the territory of the Free City to Poland and vice versa must go from the buildings mentioned in (*a*) to the one place or places selected in Polish territory, and no postal, telegraphic, or telephonic messages or communications or matter can be received or delivered on this route except in the establishment mentioned in (*a*). By the words "received" and "delivered" is meant reception or delivery by whatever means employed and does not distinguish between German technical postal terms.

* This decision was made at the request of the Danzig Senate after the Polish Postal Administration in Danzig had installed a Polish Postal, Telephone and Telegraph Service on January 5, 1925, without previously informing the general public.

(*c*) The use of letter boxes outside the limits of the building or buildings mentioned in (*a*) and of a collection and delivery service by means of postmen in any part of the territory of the Free City is inadmissible and contrary to the decision of 5/25/22.

(*d*) The office mentioned in (*a*) is not intended to deal with all letters posted anywhere in Danzig territory for Poland or abroad whether by Polish nationals or other inhabitants of the Free City, but is intended to enable the Polish authorities legally established in Danzig territory to make up mails and despatch them direct to Poland or abroad from that Post Office and nowhere else, and also to deal with through mails from Poland, via the Port of Danzig, to countries beyond the sea and vice versa.

(*e*) Paragraphs (1) and (2) of the Agreement of 4/19/23 regarding the sorting office and the Agreement of August 29, 1924, regarding the sorting office for overseas mails in the harbor remain undisturbed by this decision.

M. S. MacDonnell

No. 16 Advisory Opinion of a Committee of Jurists Nominated by the Council of the League of Nations*

Extract

Geneva, February 19, 1925

On December 12, 1922, the High Commissioner of the League of Nations at Danzig took the following decision in virtue of Article 39 of the Treaty between Poland and the Free City of Danzig, dated November 9, 1920:

> "Poland has no right to establish on Danzig territory a Railway Direction which deals with the management of railways other than those situated within the territory of the Free City, except by agreement with the Free City of Danzig."

. . . . . The Treaty of Versailles gave to Poland certain rights in relation to the Free City of Danzig with the object of ensuring to Poland free access to the sea. As the attribution of these rights to Poland constitutes a departure from the ordinary rules of international law with regard to relations between States, it was necessary to provide for them in a treaty. Such provision is made in the Treaty of Versailles and in the decisions and agreements which followed it.

Poland maintains that, among the exceptional rights which were conferred upon her, is included the right to a railway administration on

* Approved by the Council of the League of Nations on March 13, 1925.

Danzig territory, which shall control not only the Danzig railways, the management of which was entrusted to Poland, but also other Polish railways outside the territory of Danzig. What is claimed, therefore, is the right to establish the seat of a part of the national administration on foreign soil and, if we admit the existence of an exceptional right of this kind, it must be capable of proof that it is based upon some treaty. The Committee of Jurists has examined carefully all the relevant texts, but has found no clause which either implicitly or explicitly authorizes Poland to entrust the Direction at Danzig with the management and operation of lines situated on Polish territory.

. . . . The Committee of Jurists is unable to find in the treaties, decisions and agreements in force any other provision in support of the Polish point of view. In these circumstances it is of the opinion that the High Commissioner's decision of December 12, 1922, is in conformity with the treaties, decisions and agreements in force.

van Eysinga
C. Vivante
A. Niquille

No. 17 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, February 8, 1932

When the Polish Minister called on me to-day in another connection, I directed his attention to the amazing occurrences at the tenth anniversary of the Polish Students' Club, *Bratnia Pomoc,* in Danzig. I pointed out in particular that the speech made by Poland's official Representative in Danzig, M. Lalicki, referring to the return of Danzig to the Polish motherland, as well as the statement made by Landau, a Polish colonel, to the effect that "he hoped that Polish flags would soon be flown on the Danzig City Hall" were hardly likely to allay the unrest which has prevailed among the Danzig population for some time past.

The Polish Minister evaded the issue by maintaining that he had heard nothing of the matter and added that he knew Councillor Lalicki personally as an extremely judicious man, and found it difficult to imagine that he could have made such a statement. He would do his best to clear up the matter.

Noebel

No. 18 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, January 12, 1933

At the invitation of the Polish War Comrades Associations and of the organizations for Polish military training in Danzig, whose committee according to the *Gazeta Gdanska* consists of the following societies:

War Comrades Association, Danzig Branch,
Sport Club *Gedania,*
Rowing Club,
Sport Club Orzel, a name which camouflages the *Strzelec* (Rifle) Club,
Legionnaires' Association,
Reserve Officers' Association,
Reserve N. C. O.s' Association,

a meeting of the Reservists' Association took place on the 5th inst. in the Dockyard Restaurant in Danzig, at which irresponsible anti-German and anti-Danzig speeches were again made and the incorporation of Danzig into Poland prophesied for the near future.

According to an absolutely trustworthy confidential report, a speech made by Fr. Nagorski, a Polish priest and teacher of religion at the Polish Secondary School here, deserves particular attention as it contained the most virulent attacks on Germany and Danzig. While M. Zielkiewicz, who represented Minister Papée, merely urged those present to hold together, the representative of the Marine Department, Commodore Kosianowski, spoke in very sharp terms of Danzig and emphasized the good work done by Minister Papée who missed no opportunity of rousing the Warsaw Government in its fight for Danzig. The speech of M. Dobrzycki, Director of the Head Office of the Polish Railways in Danzig, also struck a very warlike note.

This new Polish provocation has naturally made a great stir here. The local press has consequently published full reports of the proceedings and thus directed the attention of the general public to the irresponsible agitation, being carried on by Polish military organizations in Danzig territory, which lately has again become very active. Fr. Nagorski, the above-mentioned teacher of religion, has, indeed, stated in an article that the published text of his speech was an outright falsification; however, he has not yet complied with the request of the local press to supply the best possible literal translation of his speech.

von Thermann

No. 19 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, February 24, 1933

I have the honor of enclosing a copy of a memorandum drawn up by the Senate relating to economic relations between Danzig and Poland with particular reference to the new Polish measures of supervision.

For the Consul-General
Koester

Enclosure

From the time of the preliminary negotiations for the Treaty of Versailles to the present, Poland has pursued her policy in regard to Danzig with the greatest consistency. Not having succeeded in the polonization of Danzig by means of the Treaty of Versailles, the Convention of Paris and the Warsaw Agreement, she has been furthering that aim by economic pressure.

Pressure on Danzig grew particularly severe in 1925 when the German-Polish customs and economic war began. Increasing efforts were made to cut off Danzig's economic and cultural connection with the Reich and especially to prevent Danzig from importing German goods which the Free City was entitled to purchase on a quota basis or for re-export after a refining process.

In 1929 Poland's struggle against Danzig had already assumed proportions which threatened the independent economic and political existence of the Free City. Year by year the struggle grew in intensity, and has now reached its climax.

In the years immediately following Danzig's separation from the Reich, Poland attempted to strangle her by cutting off deliveries of foodstuffs from Poland. Later she adopted the method of preventing Danzig's trade and industry from exporting goods to Poland.

Two main pretexts were given for this:

1. Danzig's traffic in refined products, which Poland asserted, was unfairly tolerated by the Danzig customs authorities.
2. Goods imported by Danzig under a quota from the Reich and from other foreign countries. Goods included in these quotas, Poland maintained, were largely exported to Poland although intended only for Danzig, and Poland insisted that no quota goods even if subjected to processing or working-up (nationalized) should be permitted to enter Poland.

In consequence of petitions lodged by Danzig and Poland, the Council of the League of Nations considered these questions in May and November, 1932, and agreed on the main points with the attitude adopted by the Danzig Government. The League expressly declared that Poland must permit the import of goods, which had undergone a refining process in Danzig, until such time as the dispute was satisfactorily settled.

The League Council further decided that goods falling under Danzig quotas must be regarded as Danzig goods, provided that they had been sufficiently subjected to processing or working-up, and that, consequently, unrestricted trade in these goods must be permitted in the Danzig-Polish customs area.

The Polish Government have completely disregarded these decisions of the League Council and during the last few months have introduced a system which the Danzig Government regard as a contravention of existing treaties.

According to Article 215 of the Warsaw Agreement, traffic in goods between Danzig and Poland is to be unrestricted except in a few specified instances. Yet Poland now demands that all goods, irrespective of whether they are quota goods, Danzig goods or even Polish goods, must have their invoices stamped by Polish authorities in Danzig; i. e., Poland demands an import permit for all goods to be exported from Danzig to Poland. This import permit or the official stamp on the invoices is only granted on condition that the industries and businesses concerned submit to a thorough-going supervision by Polish officials. As though this were not enough, Poland demands that the firms which have had no alternative but to subject themselves to such supervision must buy goods only from firms that are likewise supervised by Polish officials. The Polish Government further determine from which firms in Danzig the supervised Danzig firms may buy, and in countless cases direct them to buy goods from Poland, although the same or better goods are obtainable in the Free City of Danzig. Recently these firms have been informed that they must employ a certain number of Polish workers or they will not be recognized by the Polish authorities and can no longer count on exporting goods to Poland.

If the Government of the Free City continue to put up with this system and Poland proceeds to make further demands, it is perfectly clear that the whole of Danzig's economic life will soon be subject to Polish supervision, to the supervision of Polish officials and Polish competitors, and that the door will be opened to commercial espionage. The time is approaching when Poland will demand of Danzig firms that, if they wish to maintain their existence in Danzig, they must employ a number of Polish workers corresponding to the amount of their exports to Poland.

The League Commissioner and the Council of the League of Nations are powerless in face of such Polish measures.

No. 20 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, March 2, 1933

Within the last ten years Poland has been guilty of the following particularly grave encroachments upon Danzig's sovereign rights:

1. Non-admission of a Danzig delegate to the Berne Railway Conference (decision of League Commissioner of January 8, 1924).
2. One-sided regulation of the issue of passports to Danzig nationals (decision of the League Commissioner of January 28, 1924).
3. Prevention of a Danzig delegation from participating in the Stockholm Universal Postal Congress (decision of League Commissioner of November 10, 1924).
4. Arbitrary establishment of a Polish postal service in Danzig (decision of League Commissioner of February 2, 1925).*
5. Landing Polish naval patrols without the authorization of the Danzig Government (report of the League Commissioner, August 15, 1931).
6. Arbitrary promulgation on April 21, 1932 of the Penal Law against Tax Defaulters, etc. (dealt with by the League of Nations Council in its meeting of May 10, 1932).
7. Orders to prevent the temporary exportation of goods for refining processes as practiced in Danzig (characterized as *action directe* in the decision of the League Commissioner of March 29, 1932).
8. Arbitrary introduction of Polish currency on the Polish State Railways (letter of the League Commissioner to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, of November 4, 1932).

von Lieres

No. 21 Letter from the League Commissioner in Danzig to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations

(Translation)

Danzig, March 7, 1933

On the morning of March 6, M. Papée, Polish Minister and diplomatic representative at Danzig, informed me that the Polish Government, in view of the situation created by the attitude recently adopted by the

* Cf. No. 15.

Senate in the affair of policing the port, and in view of the danger which existed, according to the Polish Government, of a sudden attack on the Polish munitions depot at the Westerplatte by certain Danzig elements, had decided provisionally to reinforce the guard detachment for the Polish munitions depot on the Westerplatte. M. Papée added that the guard would not go outside the Westerplatte area and that it would be entrusted exclusively with the duties assigned to the Polish guard detachment under the Council resolution of December 9, 1925.

I drew M. Papée's attention to the provisions in force, more particularly the Danzig-Polish Agreement of June 22, 1921, and the report submitted to the Council of the League of Nations on December 9, 1925, and also to the explanations made by the Polish representative on that occasion. It is quite clear from the aforesaid provisions that the strength of the Westerplatte guard detachment could not be increased until the Polish Government had submitted an application to that effect to the High Commissioner and until the latter had given the necessary authorization.

I informed M. Papée that, such being the case, I must protest against the decision which the Polish Government had taken without first applying to the High Commissioner, and must ask him to take the necessary measures to remedy the situation thus created.

A few hours later, the Senate of the Free City of Danzig addressed a letter to me, informing me that the Senate had noted that the strength of the Polish guard detachment on the Westerplatte had been increased by upwards of 100 units armed with machine-guns and other weapons. They had arrived that very day on the steamship "Wilja". The Senate requested me to inform it whether that increase in effectives had taken place with the High Commissioner's authorization and, if so, for what reasons. In reply, I informed the President of the Senate that I had given no authorization to that effect; that I had sent to the Polish diplomatic representative a copy of the Senate's letter. I had requested him, if the information contained in the Senate's letter was correct, to take the necessary measures for withdrawing the effectives in question from the Westerplatte without delay, since the increase in effectives had taken place without the Polish Government first having submitted an application to that effect to the High Commissioner and without the latter having given the necessary authorization.

During the evening, the Senate requested me to decide, under the terms of Article 39 of the Paris Treaty, that the Polish Government was bound to re-establish without delay the legal status based on the Treaties and to reduce the Westerplatte guard to the prescribed strength. The Senate requested me further to take the necessary measures to establish the fact that the increase in effectives on the Westerplatte without the High Commissioner's authorization constituted "direct action."

When transmitting this request to M. Papée, I expressed the hope that the reply which I was expecting from him to my letter of the previous day would obviate the Senate's request.

Not having obtained from the Polish Government an assurance that the effectives in question would be withdrawn without delay, and in view of the gravity of the present affair, I am obliged, to ask you to be good enough to take the necessary measures to place on the agenda of a meeting of the Council at the earliest possible date the question of "direct action," raised in the Senate's request of March 6, 1933. I make this appeal on the basis of the Council's decision of March 13, 1925, on which the Council reserved for itself, on principle, the right to decide questions of "direct action."

In order to simplify procedure and thus to facilitate the Council's examination of the question I am taking the liberty of submitting to the Council also the question which forms the subject of point 1 of the Senate's request of March 6;* I do so in the exercise of the right conferred on me by Article 39 of the Treaty of Paris to refer to the Council matters which are submitted to me for decision under the terms of that article.**

Helmer Rosting

No. 22 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, March 8, 1933

In spite of their unpleasant experiences during the last few months, when they attempted openly to break the law and to ignore existing treaties and decisions of the League authorities in Danzig, e. g., when the destroyer *Wicher* entered the port of Danzig unannounced and when the decree concerning the introduction of Polish currency on the Danzig railways was issued, the Polish Government have committed a further infringement of the law by increasing the garrison on the Westerplatte by about a hundred armed policemen without the consent of the High Commissioner.

With regard to the legal situation, the Agreement concluded between Danzig and Poland on June 22, 1921 stipulates that the High Com-

* Under point 1 the Senate begs the High Commissioner "to decide, in accordance with Article 39 of the Paris Treaty, that it is the duty of the Polish Government immediately to restore the legal position as laid down in the treaties and to reduce the garrison of the Westerplatte to the prescribed strength."

** In consequence of this letter the matter was placed on the agenda of the 71st (extraordinary) session of the League of Nations Council. At the meeting of the League Council on March 14, the Polish representative declared that the Polish Government had decided to reduce the guard detachment on the Westerplatte to its normal strength without delay. The rapporteur, Sir John Simon, British Secretary for Foreign Affairs, stated before the League Council that the Polish Government would have complied with the request of the League Commissioner when they had completed the withdrawal of their troops. The matter was thus settled in accordance with Danzig's request.

missioner has the right to be kept continually informed regarding the strength of the Polish guard in charge of the Polish war material in the port of Danzig. It was especially emphasized therein that the strength of the garrison be fixed by common consent between the High Commissioner and the Polish Government. (Cf. *Danziger Staats- und Völkerrecht, Stilke,* 1927, p. 610.) This Agreement was submitted to the Council of the League of Nations at the meeting of June 23, 1923, and confirmed anew in a resolution passed by the League Council on December 9, 1925; by it the strength of the garrison was also fixed at 2 officers, 20 non-commissioned officers, and 66 men. (Cf. *Danziger Staats- und Völkerrecht,* p. 651.) On that occasion the Representative of the Polish Government, by stating that the Polish Government reserved the right to submit a request to the League for the increase of the number of the guard if conditions demanded it, himself recognized that Poland had no right to undertake such an increase without the consent of the League of Nations.

In the history of the events leading up to this most recent action on the part of the Polish Government, it is noteworthy that on the 4th inst. the Polish Diplomatic Representative here enquired of the High Commissioner, first by word of mouth and then in writing, whether he considered Danzig's action in the matter of the harbor police as an *"action directe"*. At the time the High Commissioner declined to answer, on the grounds that he was a judge and thus could not decide such a question without a motion being brought forward, and that the League was the proper authority to pronounce a decision as to whether this constituted an *"action directe"*.

On the morning of March 5, M. Papée informed the High Commissioner that the Polish Government intended to increase the garrison on the Westerplatte. After Herr Rosting's objection that the strength of the garrison ought not to exceed a certain figure, M. Papée explained that Poland was entitled, according to the treaties, to strengthen the garrison in the event of danger. He claimed that such danger now existed, for the Polish Government had received information to the effect that a military run on the Westerplatte was intended. Since M. Papée could not furnish any proof, the High Commissioner protested from the outset against any increase in the garrison of the Westerplatte. M. Papée's allegations are nothing but pure fiction.

In spite of Herr Rosting's protest, M. Papée told him on March 6 that the Polish Government had determined to increase the garrison on the Westerplatte. Herr Rosting immediately protested against this decision of the Polish Government. M. Papée thereupon tried to make concessions. He proposed that the Polish oversight might be rectified, if Herr Rosting would consider the former conversation as a motion brought forward for permission for the increase, and, while rejecting it, tacitly tolerate a temporary increase in the garrison. Fortunately Herr Rosting immediately declined this offer.

Meanwhile the Senate was advised by press reports from Warsaw that a force of one hundred Polish policemen was on its way from Warsaw to Danzig, ostensibly to strengthen the garrison on the Westerplatte. Besides that, as the President of the Police had been informed through a reliable source, the Polish ammunition and troop-transport S. S. *Wilja*, coming from Gdynia, had entered the ammunition dock on the Westerplatte with a hundred policemen and eleven machine-guns on board. Thereupon the Senate appealed to the High Commissioner and, representing the true state of affairs, requested to be informed whether he had granted the increase. This he immediately denied.

As the High Commissioner in the course of his further endeavors did not receive the requested assurance from the Polish Government that the troops in question would be immediately withdrawn, he begged the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, in view of the seriousness of the situation, to place the question on the agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the League Council to be held during the course of this week.

Poland's line of action has naturally evoked very bitter feeling in Danzig. In consequence thereof, the Senate, acting on a suggestion by Herr Rosting, has, as a precautionary measure, called up part of the population in order to prevent irresponsible persons from doing damage to Polish buildings, letter-boxes, etc., and from attacking Poles.

von Thermann

No. 23 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, March 15, 1933

The situation arising from the fact that the ammunition transport S. S. *Wilja* is still lying in the ammunition dock on the Westerplatte is developing in a manner nothing short of grotesque owing to the attitude of the Polish authorities. As already reported, Poland tried to explain away the non-departure of the *Wilja* by alleging that the ship had engine trouble. At the same time it was reported that the ship would now leave the port of Danzig with the aid of a tug. When this had not been done after a further delay of 72 hours, the Senate again protested against this contravention of the Agreement with regard to the Westerplatte. Meanwhile the Polish Diplomatic Representative here informed the Senate that the engine trouble on the *Wilja* had now been repaired, but that the steamer must still remain in dock because a consignment of war material, previously announced, was on its way from Dirschau and had to be put aboard. Thereupon the Senate again protested that the

ship was being detained in the ammunition dock on the Westerplatte by Poland although no detailed statements could be made regarding a prospective load of munitions. The Senate has, therefore, renewed their request that the *Wilja* should immediately leave the dock.

In addition it is noteworthy—for it clearly shows the outrageous misuse of the Westerplatte by Poland—that the war material which arrived on Monday, and the shipment of which via the Westerplatte served as a pretext for docking the *Wilja,* was taken from the ammunition dock on board a tug-boat on the 11th inst. and towed out to the roadstead, where it was shipped aboard the Polish vessel *Slask* for shipment abroad. The sole object of Poland's procedure is, of course, to detain the *Wilja* in the ammunition dock for the time being on one pretext or another, because the reinforcements for the garrison on the Westerplatte are on board.

The only satisfaction derived from Poland's attitude is that the Polish Government themselves now demonstrate, in the eyes of the whole world, the impossibility of a system involving the transportation of ammunition via Danzig.

von Thermann

No. 24 The German Minister in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, March 11, 1933

During the past few days I have had an opportunity of discussing the question of the Westerplatte with the representatives here of the most important Powers in the League of Nations, and have endeavored to rectify existing and partly erroneous impressions with a view to their eventually submitting reports on the matter.

This new *coup de force* is unanimously regarded as "genuinely Beck", although this time, probably in contrast to the *Wicher* case,* Marshal Pilsudski seems to have given his consent beforehand. The main object of this undertaking is considered to be the settling of the police question.** The Polish assertion about the Westerplatte being in danger has apparently not been given much credence up to the present. Furthermore, it is often said that M. Beck intended his action to constitute a reply to the German elections, and it may be that this consideration also

* Cf. No. 22.

** In 1925 Danzig and Poland had concluded an Agreement, valid until 1927, regarding the formation of a mixed harbor police force, consisting of Danzig and Polish citizens. The situation thus created continued unaltered after the expiration of the Agreement until, on February 15, 1933, the Danzig Senate in pursuance of the right to re-examine the situation, granted them in the Agreement, withdrew the Danzig citizens from the Mixed Harbor Police and placed the executive police authority for the port of Danzig in the hands of the Danzig police, thus reverting to the conditions existing in 1925.

played a part. I am inclined to believe, however, that his principal secondary motive was to give warning to the advocates of revision of treaties in Europe.

Among the diplomats here, I have scarcely found one who has not more or less sharply criticized or even condemned the Polish mode of procedure. On the other hand, it has also been pointed out at times in the course of conversation that it is difficult to comprehend why the Danzig Senate chose this particular moment to give notice of the termination of the Agreement regarding the harbor police. Particular emphasis was laid on these charges—which I countered with reference to reports of the Consulate-General in Danzig—by the British Ambassador. His judgment appears to be of particular importance with regard to Great Britain's rôle as *rapporteur* in this matter; unfortunately, however, he displays, for the most part, a pronounced prejudice in German-Polish and Danzig-Polish affairs.

With regard to the question as to whether Polish procedure is assuming a provocative character, with the aim of causing incidents or creating *faits accomplis,* the opinion prevailing in diplomatic circles here is that such intentions are not present. The reason generally given for this view is that Poland has no interest in creating situations which must forcibly raise the question of Germany's eastern frontiers. Even assuming this conception to be correct, it must be admitted that those who play with fire cannot escape at least the blame for a *dolus eventualis.*

von Moltke

No. 25 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, May 3, 1933

The steadily growing competition between Danzig and the neighboring port of Gdynia forced the Government of the Free City as early as May, 1930 to apply to the High Commissioner in order to clarify Poland's obligations in respect of the full utilization of the port of Danzig.

A Senate Memorandum of May 9, 1930, dealing with this point, begins with the following fundamental exposition:

"Before the War, Danzig was an ideal port. She had a nice balance between exports and imports, and a traffic in highly valuable commodities, which were exchanged and traded exclusively by Danzig merchants. During many years of stable business, the harbor facilities of Danzig had been adopted to this intrepôt trade with which it was eminently capable of dealing. This harmonious relationship between the port of Danzig and Danzig's trade was destroyed by the developments of post-war years.

Owing to the preponderance of entrepôt goods passing through the port of Danzig, the Danzig trade proper has lost its pre-eminence. From a trading port, Danzig has deteriorated to a mere shipping port. The four-fold increase in the traffic in goods, expressed in tonnage, is based on the extraordinary increase in the trade in bulk articles of low value (especially in the export of coal), the value of which in 1927, while it represented 50 per cent. of the entire entrepôt trade, amounted to only 8 per cent. of the total value of the export trade via the port of Danzig. Traffic in bulk articles of low value is characteristic of Danzig's economic life in post-war years. But trade in these bulk articles is carried on outside Danzig. Their turnover has necessitated expensive new harbor equipment involving large risks, and their utility for certain branches of business connected with shipping and navigation by no means compensates for the damage done by the elimination of the port of Danzig from many spheres of commerce.

"These disadvantages of the post-war period have recently assumed disastrous proportions, and have caused serious crises in the trade and in the whole economic life of Danzig, the reactions of which threaten the very foundations of the Danzig State. In the opinion of the Government of the Free City of Danzig the causes thereof are to be found in the fact that a large part of the Polish trade has been diverted from Danzig, because Poland has not adequately developed the railways and water-ways leading to Danzig, because she has failed to promote sufficiently the improvements of the harbor of Danzig, because she has constructed a port of her own at Gdynia in proximity to Danzig and, by neglecting Danzig's free access to the sea, fosters the traffic of the port of Gdynia by every possible means."

In the meantime the economic policy deliberately pursued by Poland has led to a further shocking decline in the turnover of the port of Danzig, as may be seen from the following statistics:

The import and export figures for Gdynia expressed in tons were as follows:

	Import	Export	Total
1929	1,792,951	6,766,699	8,559,650
1930	1,090,631	7,122,462	8,213,093
1931	754,300	7,576,205	8,330,505
1932	428,103	5,047,949	5,476,052

In comparison with those of Danzig the figures for the traffic of the port of Gdynia are especially interesting.

The import and export figures for Gdynia expressed in tons were as follows:

	Import	Export	Total
1926	179	413,826	414,005
1927	6,702	889,439	896,141

1928	192,711	1,767,058	1,959,769
1929	329,644	2,492,858	2,822,502
1930	504,117	3,121,631	3,625,748
1931	558,549	4,741,565	5,300,114
1932	432,887	4,761,400	5,194,287

A comparison of the above figures proves definitely that the progressive decline of the port of Danzig corresponds with the rise of Gdynia, the development of which Poland is fostering with all the means at her disposal.

von Lieres

B. Germany's Efforts to Come to an Understanding with Poland, 1933 to 1939

I. Negotiations Relating to a German-Polish Agreement (May, 1933 to January, 1934)

No. 26 Memorandum of the German Foreign Minister Concerning a Conversation of the Fuehrer with the Polish Minister

(Translation)

Berlin, May 2, 1933

This morning the Reich Chancellor in my presence received the Polish Minister who, on behalf of his Government, pointed out that since the National Socialist Party had came into power in Germany a growing uneasiness had manifested itself in Poland, an uneasiness which had at times amounted almost to panic. The Minister emphasized Poland's interest in a free outlet to the sea which no Polish Government could ever again renounce. For this reason Poland was compelled to maintain her title to Danzig. He had been instructed to obtain an assurance from the Chancellor that Germany had no intentions of altering the present status in Danzig.

The Chancellor replied to M. Wysocki by stating that, in the first place, he was forced to deny that Poland had any particular claim to Danzig. If uneasiness prevailed in Poland, he could say only that there was even greater cause for such uneasiness in Germany, where there was a constant feeling of being threatened on account of events in Upper Silesia, the concentration of troops on the frontier, and the occupation of the Westerplatte in Danzig. Owing to the short-sightedness of statesmen, malevolence and lack of insight, the frontier between Germany and Poland had been fixed in such a way that, as long as this demarcation held good, a peaceful coexistence of the two peoples was practically inconceivable. He respected every nationality and regarded Poland as an actuality which he was fully prepared to acknowledge. But at the same time he demanded that Poland for her part should treat Germany as an actuality. If, at the time when the Treaty of Versailles was signed, people had not been wholly unable to think clearly, Poland herself ought never to have consented to the establishment of a corridor through German territory, for it was obvious that such a corridor would inevitably give rise to a continual state of tension between Germany and Poland. It would have been much wiser to have chosen the outlet to the sea, to which the Minister had referred as an inalienable right on Poland's part, on the other side of East Prussia. Had that been done, friendly relations would long have existed between Germany and Poland and there would also have been a possibility of an economic understanding. He, the Chancellor, only

hoped that the political questions still pending between Germany and Poland would one day be investigated and dealt with dispassionately by the statesmen of both countries. He was convinced that a way out of the present intolerable situation could then be found. Germany wanted peace. He was far from intending to expropriate Polish territory by force. He reserved the right, however, to vindicate the rights to which he was entitled by virtue of treaty at any time and as he thought fit.

At the request of the Polish Minister, the Chancellor agreed to issue a *communiqué* concerning his meeting and conversation with the Minister, the text of which is annexed.*

Frhr. von Neurath

No. 27 German Official Communiqué, May 3, 1933

(Translation)

M. Wysocki, the Polish Minister, today called upon the German Chancellor. The conversation, at which Baron von Neurath, Minister for Foreign Affairs, was present, dealt with the political questions pending between Germany and Poland. The Reich Chancellor emphasized the firm intention of the German Government to adhere strictly in their attitude and their actions to the terms of existing treaties. The Chancellor expressed the wish that the two countries should dispassionately investigate and deal with their common interests.

No. 28 Polish Official Communiqué, May 4, 1933

(Translation)

The conversation which the German Chancellor had with M. Wysocki, the Polish Minister, in the presence of Baron von Neurath, Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the 2nd inst., a report of which has been published by the Wolff Bureau, has had a calming influence on German-Polish relations.

In connection with this conversation, M. Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, received Herr von Moltke, the German Minister in Warsaw, and emphasized the fact that the Polish Government for their part have the firm intention of adhering strictly in their attitude and their actions to the terms of existing treaties. The Polish Foreign Minister further expressed the wish that the two countries should dispassionately investigate and deal with their common interests.

* Cf. No. 27.

No. 29 Extract from the Speech by the Fuehrer to the Reichstag, May 17, 1933

(Translation)

. . . . . The mentality of the past century which made people believe that they could make Germans out of Poles and Frenchmen is completely foreign to us; the more so as we are passionately opposed to any attempt on the part of others to alienate us from our German tradition.

We look at the European nations around us as undeniable realities. The French, the Poles, etc. are our neighbors, and we know that through no possible development of history can this reality be altered. It would have been better for the world if these realities in Germany's case had been appreciated in the Treaty of Versailles. For the object of a really lasting treaty should be not to cause new wounds and keep old ones open, but to close wounds and heal them. A thoughtful treatment of European problems at that time could certainly have found a settlement in the east which would have met both the reasonable claims of Poland and the natural rights of Germany. The Treaty of Versailles did not provide this solution. Nevertheless no German Government will of its own accord break an agreement which cannot be removed without being replaced by a better one.* . . . . .

No. 30 The German Minister in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, August 30, 1933

In considering what might be done toward an improvement of German-Polish relations, it would appear that the cancellation of the measures adopted in the customs war which has been going on for eight years now, would be of especially far-reaching political importance. There is no doubt that the abolition of the measures adopted by both

* The same idea was expounded by the Fuehrer in his speech in the Berlin Sportpalast on October 24, 1933, when he said:

"Just as they acted irrationally from an economic point of view, so they acted irrationally from a political point of view. Take one single example: Between Germany and Poland a Corridor was created. At that time another solution could have been found. Europe contains both Germans and Poles. The two nations will have to get accustomed to living side by side and to putting up with one another. It is neither possible for the Poles to imagine the map of Europe without the German nation, nor are we foolish enough to imagine it without the Poles. We realize that both nations exist and that they must get on with each other. Why then was an apple of discord thrown between them? At that time the Powers could have done anything. Why did they do just this? Only to perpetuate hatred, only to give rise to strife between nations which would otherwise have gotten along with one another. Believe me, it would have been possible to find another way of dealing justly with both countries."

sides during this period would not only have a beneficial effect on the further development of economic relations, but would also make a great impression on public opinion favorable to an easing of the tension between Germany and Poland.

However greatly we may distrust the intentions and methods of the other side—recently, in particular, Poland has given us fresh and repeated cause for this—I consider it possible and imperative to overcome practical and psychological difficulties. The German-Polish commercial war which even as recently as last autumn could be described as stationary warfare, has lately resumed the character of an offensive war. To do away with this aggravation and in addition to re-establish more normal and improved commercial relations would, more than anything else, contribute in a superlative degree to a *détente* in German-Polish political relations, in accordance with the principles proclaimed by the German Chancellor and the initiative taken by Danzig to settle points of controversy with Poland.*

von Moltke

No. 31 The State Secretary at the Foreign Office to the German Minister in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, September 25, 1933

The opinion is shared here that, as a part of the policy to bring about a *détente* in German-Polish relations, economic conversations with Poland should be reopened.

As regards the substance of negotiations with Poland, the first point for discussion should be the abolition of antagonistic measures on both sides. The German Government are prepared to take this step, provided the Polish Government adopt a similar attitude. Negotiations will show how far the volume of trade, which has diminished extraordinarily on both sides, could be expanded by means of mutual concessions. In view of the Polish system of import embargoes and of frequently prohibitive customs duties, the concessions on their side would have to take the form of import and custom quotas.

I ask you to discuss the question of the resumption of economic discussions with the Polish Government and to report on the result.**

von Bülow

* Cf. No. 179 (note).

** Negotiations commenced at the beginning of October and led to the signing of the "Customs Truce Protocol" on March 7, 1934.

No. 32 The State Secretary at the Foreign Office to the German Minister in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, November 15, 1933

The conversation between the Chancellor and M. Lipski took place this morning in the presence of Baron von Neurath and lasted for about an hour. The official *communiqué* is published by WTB. This *communiqué* has been agreed upon with M. Lipski, who has also obtained the approval of the Warsaw Government.*

M. Lipski began the conversation by conveying greetings from Marshal Pilsudski and giving expression to the Marshal's wish that German-Polish relations might be rendered more friendly by means of direct discussion. He emphasized the fact that it had always been the Marshal's desire to maintain friendly relations with Germany. The German Chancellor replying in detail to M. Lipski, who had spoken at some length, stated in the first place that his point of view as a National Socialist was known; he reckoned with facts, and regarded the existence of the Polish State as a dictum. Just as in his speech to the Reichstag in May of this year,** the Chancellor declared that he was opposed to the nationalization of foreign territories by force. Poland and Germany happened to be neighboring states—this fact must be borne in mind—and it would be madness to wage a war for the sake of minor adjustments of a frontier. He was, however, compelled to insist that by the Treaty of Versailles a situation had been created which was intolerable for Germany and would forever be a source of sorrow to every German. He believed that it would have been equally possible to meet Poland's wish for a free outlet to the sea in another way. He had been a soldier, he knew war, and knew, too, that even a victorious war would not bring lasting advantage to any party and, judged by the sacrifice involved, would be out of all proportion to the gain. He believed, however, that with goodwill and by the creation of a suitable atmosphere, a peaceful solution could be found even to difficult problems. With these thoughts in mind he welcomed Marshal Pilsudski's suggestion, and, for his part, was perfectly ready to make a declaration that the German Government intended to renounce any solution by force of the questions as yet unsettled between Germany and Poland.

Bülow

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* The text of the "communique" is as follows:—
"This morning the Reich Chancellor received the Polish Minister who called on him for the first time. The discussion concerning German-Polish relations revealed the complete agreement of both Governments to tackle questions affecting both countries by means of direct negotiations and to renounce any resort to force in their mutual relations."

** Cf. No. 29.

No. 33 The Foreign Minister to the German Minister in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, November 24, 1933

The Reich Chancellor agrees to the draft of a German-Polish declaration which has already been personally delivered to you here.* The Chancellor further agrees that you should hand this draft in audience to Marshal Pilsudski on behalf of the German Chancellor. Please make immediate formal application for this audience and press for a speedy fixing of the date.

Please observe the following lines in what you say at the audience: The Chancellor sincerely thanks the Marshal for his greetings which he reciprocates. He has welcomed with satisfaction the attitude adopted by the Marshal, with whose views he is in complete accord as is clear from the joint press *communiqué*.** The Chancellor thinks it advisable not to let matters rest after the publication of this *communiqué*, but to find a way in which the ideas and aims of both Governments could be more clearly specified and have greater political weight. He had therefore instructed you to hand the Marshal a draft of a declaration such as might be made by both Governments in order to achieve the desired end. To explain the wording adopted in this draft you should point out that the Chancellor thinks it advisable not to use the traditional concepts and their somewhat outworn formulas which are already somewhat trite, but to choose instead a form which would make the political decision of the two Governments absolutely clear and would make a deeper impression than the usual form of pact which no longer enjoys its old esteem. You should, however, emphasize in this connection that the form chosen in the draft in no way affects the binding nature of the terms to be agreed upon, as can be seen from the fact that provision is made at the end for ratification.

For your information I should like to point out that the wording of the declaration as suggested by us in no way implies the recognition of Germany's existing eastern frontiers, but on the contrary articulates the fact that by means of this declaration a basis shall be created for the solution of all problems, i. e. also territorial problems.

Neurath

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* The reference is to a preliminary draft of the Declaration of January 26, 1934, published under No. 37.

** Cf. No. 32, Note.

No. 34 The German Minister in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Telegram

Warsaw, November 28, 1933

Audience with Marshal Pilsudski took place this afternoon. The conversation, at which Foreign Minister Beck was present and which lasted about an hour and a quarter, was of a definitely friendly character, and indeed the extraordinary speed with which, quite contrary to the prevailing custom, the date of the audience was fixed, can be regarded as a special mark of attention.

The Marshal, who, is inclined to let his conversation deviate from the subject under discussion and indulge in personal reminiscences, mostly of a military nature, gives the impression of a man intellectually alert but prematurely old and almost infirm in body. His fundamental attitude towards the questions under discussion was characterized by his repeated expressions of friendly appreciation of the personality of the German Chancellor, whose genuine desire for peace he frequently emphasized in the course of the conversation.

I began by conveying the Chancellor's greetings, which Pilsudski received with evident satisfaction. After having explained, according to your instructions, the form of the "declaration" chosen by us, I complied with the Marshal's wish by reading it aloud in German and supplementing this by explanations in French, with which language he is better acquainted.

Pilsudski signified his agreement with the fundamental ideas of the German proposal. He approved in particular (though in his own characteristically drastic mode of expression) the choice of a new form for the declaration, especially the absence of paragraphs which he evidently detests. He was careful however to insinuate that traditional formulas and paragraphs sometimes had their uses. He declared that he was naturally not in a position to express an opinion with regard to details in the draft, but that he wished even at this juncture to mention a particular point about which he was doubtful, namely the reference to the Locarno Treaty of arbitration, which was regarded with disfavor in Poland. Concerning future procedure the Marshal explained at some length what different persons would have to be asked to examine and give their opinion on the draft and pointed out repeatedly that this would occupy a considerable time. In the further course of the conversation, Marshal Pilsudski emphasized that he also wished to put German-Polish relations on a friendly and neighborly basis but stressed with a bluntness such as I have hardly ever experienced among Polish politicians, that the thousand-year-old hostility of the Polish people to the

Germans would give rise to grave difficulties in carrying out this policy. Consequently, this policy must not be based on sentiment but solely upon common-sense considerations. I contradicted his assertion that a similar condition prevailed in Germany and emphasized, with particular reference to recent incidents, the need for a systematic policy of *rapprochement,* such as had already been instituted with success by Germany e. g. with regard to the press. Pilsudski replied to my remarks by expressing his infinite contempt for the press, with which he wished to have nothing to do, but he admitted that something could be gained by influencing political organizations.

In conclusion I mentioned the Chancellor's desire to achieve normal relations in economic matters also. Pilsudski replied that there had been a time when only one Minister in the Polish Cabinet had opposed the customs war, whereas today it would be difficult to find a single Minister who was in favor of continuing this wretched war. But of course Poland, having weathered the economic crisis despite the fact that she had no reserves, was obliged to seek a settlement which was economically supportable.

Moltke

No. 35 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with the Polish Minister

Memo

(Translation)

Berlin, January 9, 1934

The Polish Minister called upon me to-day and handed me a revised draft of a declaration regarding the settlement of German-Polish relations. The Minister pointed out that the Polish Government had endeavored to approach our draft as closely as possible. He was invested with full powers to sign and was prepared to do so at any time.

I told M. Lipski that I must of course look through the Polish draft before expressing any opinion on it but that I would inform him as soon as possible what wishes, if any, we still desired to express.

I have some particular doubts about the suggestion that the declaration should not apply to questions "which according to international law lie within the exclusive competence of States." Obviously the object of this suggestion is to exclude the question of the treatment of the German Minority in Poland from direct discussion between the German and Polish Governments.

Frhr. von Neurath

No. 36 Memorandum of the Chief of the Legal Department in the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, January 22, 1934

On Saturday, the 20th inst. the Polish Minister announced that he wished to visit me to resume our discussions. He said that he had in the meantime discussed my questions with his Ministry in Warsaw and particularly with Marshal Pilsudski.

During the discussion the Polish proposal, according to which the declaration should not apply to questions which lie within the exclusive competence of States, M. Lipski replied to my former query by saying that this was merely intended to exclude the possibility of interference in the internal affairs of either country. He asserted, for example, that a tendency had occasionally been observed during the past year in Poland to oppose the treatment meted out to Jews in Germany. The Government had naturally refused to do so. They were wise to exclude such possibilities expressly by the wording of the declaration. I took M. Lipski at his word and told him that if the Polish Government had no other aim in view, they should word their proposal accordingly, so that the public might understand what was meant. He thereupon declared that his Government would be satisfied with the following wording:

> "Both Governments establish that this declaration does not extend to those questions which under international law are to be regarded exclusively as the internal concern of one of the two States."

This wording has an advantage over the previous wording in that it no longer excludes the possibility of a diplomatic discussion of the minorities question between Germany and Poland, for the minorities questions are undoubtedly not questions which according to international law might be regarded exclusively as the internal concern of a state.

Gaus

No. 37 Declaration Made by the German and the Polish Governments, January 26, 1934

(Translation)

The German Government and the Polish Government consider that the time has come to introduce a new phase in the political relations between Germany and Poland by direct understanding between the two States. They have, therefore, decided in the present declaration to lay the foundation for the future development of these relations.

The two Governments base their action on the fact that the maintenance and safeguarding of a lasting peace between their countries is an essential pre-condition for the general peace of Europe. They have therefore decided to base their mutual relations on the principles laid down in the Pact of Paris of August 27, 1928, and propose to define more exactly the application of these principles in so far as the relations between Germany and Poland are concerned.

Each of the two Governments, therefore, establish that the international obligations already respectively undertaken by them towards a third party do not hinder the peaceful development of their mutual relations, do not conflict with the present Declaration and are not affected by this Declaration. They establish, moreover, that this Declaration does not extend to those questions which under International Law are to be regarded exclusively as the internal concern of one of the two States.

Both Governments announce their intention to settle directly all questions whatever which concern their mutual relations. Should any disputes arise between them and agreement thereon not be reached by direct negotiations, they will in each particular case, on the basis of mutual agreement, seek a solution by other peaceful means, without prejudice to the possibility of applying, if necessary, those methods of procedure which in the event of such cases arising are provided for in other agreements in force between them. Under no circumstances, however, will they resort to force in the settlement of such disputes.

The guarantee of peace created by these principles will facilitate the great task of both Governments of finding solutions for problems of a political, economic or cultural nature based on equitable and fair adjustment of the interests of both parties.

Both Governments are convinced in this way that the relations between their countries will enjoy a prosperous development, and will lead to a neighborly spirit which will prove a blessing not only to their own countries, but also to the other peoples of Europe.

The present Declaration shall be ratified, and the instruments of ratification shall be exchanged in Warsaw as soon as possible. The Declaration is valid for a period of ten years, reckoned from the day of the exchange of the instruments of ratification. If the declaration is not denounced by one of the two Governments six months before the expiration of this period it will continue in force, but can then be denounced by either Government at any time on notice of six months being given.

Done in two original documents in the German and Polish languages respectively.

Berlin, January 26, 1934.

For the German Government
C. Freiherr von Neurath

For the Polish Government
Jozef Lipski

No. 38 The German Minister in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, January 27, 1934

Foreign Minister Beck requested me to call on him today and expressed gratitude and lively satisfaction that German-Polish Agreement had been signed. He said that the significance of this event which might be termed historic, seemed to him and especially to Marshal Pilsudski to have been enhanced by the words addressed by the German Chancellor to the Polish Minister. The impression made on the Polish public was extraordinary, and greater than he had expected. For example, the public announcement in the largest concert hall in Warsaw had called forth warm applause from the audience and even provincial newspapers had had to triple their editions. This showed that after the failure of international conferences and pacts, a courageous policy revealing a spirit of leadership could create a profound impression, especially when it responded to a general longing for peace. Herein lay encouragement to pursue this line of policy.

The Opposition parties had not as yet expressed an opinion. But he was not afraid of them and would in the course of next week seize an opportunity of defending his policy in the Sejm.

The reaction of world public opinion was, as far as he could judge from available reports, entirely favorable. He particularly welcomed the Havas *communiqué* on the matter, which had caused him to commission the Polish Ambassador in Paris to express his thanks to the French Government.

Moltke

II. The Situation of the German Minority not Improved by the German-Polish Policy of Rapprochement

(November, 1933 to August, 1934)

No. 39 The German Consul at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Thorn, November 25, 1933

German election meeting at Graudenz on Monday, November 20, was interrupted by persons said to have been hired for the purpose, when Secretary-General of German Minority spoke on German-Polish *rapprochement.* The same elements were cause of a serious clash leading to bloodshed on Thursday.

On Thursday confidential agents connected with German list for municipal elections held meeting at Masonic Lodge. Towards 9 p. m. above-mentioned elements appeared, pelted and injured assembled Germans with beer mugs. Towards 11 p. m. police ordered those present to go home. Older members attending meeting were permitted to return home unmolested. Towards midnight younger members left in a body accompanied by six policemen who led them into narrow dark side-street where they were attacked by elements above-mentioned.

More than a dozen injured, one died while being conveyed to hospital and another is in critical condition. According to statement by reliable witnesses there is reason to suspect that attackers are members of the Rifle Club and bribed by the Government Party.

For the Consul

Hoops

No. 40 The German Minister in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, November 29, 1939

During a conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs on another matter, I took the opportunity of speaking to him about the outrages at Graudenz.* I pointed out to him in particular the wide-spread indignation which the incident had aroused among the German public whereby the recent gratifying improvement of the general atmosphere was jeopardized again.

* Cf. No. 39.

M. Beck replied that he, too, regretted these incidents. For the rest, he attempted to excuse the outrages on the grounds of political passions, which are whipped up at election time in any country. Only after I had referred to the anti-German propaganda week of the West Marches Society, and the contrast between such untimely demonstrations and the reciprocal declarations made by the two Governments, was the Foreign Minister moved to state that energetic measures would be taken to deal with the offenders, and that he himself would get in touch with the Minister of the Interior in order to put a stop to the agitation.

May I request you not to bring the fact of my intervention in this matter to the notice of the press, since it is, in any case, extremely difficult here to bring up the minority questions for official discussion, and publication would only render it still more difficult.

von Moltke

No. 41 The German Minister in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, December 28, 1933

Shortly before Christmas M. Calonder, President of the Mixed Commission at Kattowitz, spent two days in Warsaw with the object of re-establishing contact with the Polish Government after a fairly long interval. I was the only foreign representative invited to an important dinner given by the Under-Secretary of State, Count Szembek, a mark of attention which is to a certain extent worthy of note in connection with the present policy of *rapprochement*. After dinner I had an opportunity of talking at some length with President Calonder. He professed to be very well satisfied with his conversation with M. Beck, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, although he could not rid himself of the impression that the latter's great desire for independence made all international supervision very distasteful to him. Nevertheless, he said things would be much better in Upper Silesia if M. Beck's views on the treatment of the minority were shared there. But that was unfortunately by no means the case and much to his regret he had to state that the welcome policy of *rapprochement* now being pursued by Germany and Poland had as yet brought no improvement in this respect. He even had the impression that the provincial authorities rebelled inwardly at the idea of a *rapprochement* and that they were attempting, by the adoption of severe measures against the minority, to counteract the Government's policy or else to achieve *faits accomplis* in case the *rapprochement* policy should actually make headway.

In reply to my question as to whether he was satisfied with the trend of affairs in German Upper Silesia, President Calonder said that he had been very anxious in the spring, but that in the meantime there had been a decided improvement, so that in the German section of his district he had, apart from a few trifling matters, practically no cause for complaint. Moreover, he was looking forward exceedingly to calling at the beginning of January upon the German Chancellor, whose political genius he sincerely admired.

von Moltke

No. 42 The German Consul at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, March 31, 1934

The new list of names for Agrarian Reform in 1934, published after the signing of the ten-year pact, provides ample proof that, apart from a few outward signs of an improvement in the atmosphere, things have remained unchanged despite the agreement. Eleven estates, ten of which are German-owned, appear on the list. Expressed in hectares, some 1,032 hectares of the total 1,474 to be expropriated are German-owned. Eight of these ten estates have already appeared on previous lists, in five of these cases the owners were alloted no additional ground* and the estates are consequently so diminished in size that there seems to be no prospect of maintaining them. All ten estates were, and are, thoroughly sound economically, which cannot be said of the neighboring Polish estates. Despite this, the owners of the latter are being given additional ground. This rigorous action on the part of the Polish authorities is not only directly opposed to the spirit of the ten-year pact, but is not in accordance with the wishes of the League of Nations which demanded at Geneva that due reparation should be made for the Polish agrarian measures enforced hitherto.

von Küchler

* According to the Polish Agrarian Law, when an estate was divided up, its owner could under certain conditions be permitted to retain an area in excess of the normal acreage (i. e., "additional ground" over and above the normal acreage).

No. 43 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, April 15, 1934

On April 13, 1934 a procession in protest against the German minority and the German associations took place at Antonienhütte, Eastern Upper Silesia, organized by Insurgents', Rifle and Reservists' Associations, in which some five hundred persons took part. Two police officers accompanied the procession. The Reservists' Band played during the procession, which passed along all the streets at Antonienhütte. Polish songs were sung. In those streets where members of the German minority live, several members of the procession who were armed with revolvers, fired some 25 to 30 shots. Choruses shouted the following: "Down with the German Minority Schools and Associations! Long live the Polish School, down with the Agreement!" About 9 p. m. the procession dispersed in front of the Town Hall. After the procession several members of the German minority were accosted and threatened in the streets by Insurgents.

For the Consul-General

Quiring

No. 44 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, April 28, 1934

The account of Polish measures directed against the Minority school system, as contained in the Appendix to the Order of April 25,* gives only a slight picture of the more or less overt terrorism being practised at present in connection with the entering of children for the German Minority schools in Polish Upper Silesia So far there has been no noticeable relaxation, as compared with previous years, of the agitation carried on by the most diverse Polish organizations. On the contrary, this year again every ounce of economic and moral pressure has been brought to bear on parents and guardians in order to prevent them from entering their children for, or transferring them to, Minority schools. Certainly the policy of rapprochement has as yet had no effect here.

For the Consul-General

Quiring

* The Appendix contains an account of attempts to intimidate and terrorize parents who had entered their children in the German Minority school.

Property of University of Mo. at St. Louis

No. 45 The German Consul at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, April 28, 1934

A concert by the Dresden String Quartet, which was to have taken place at Thorn on Friday, had to be cancelled as the performers were refused a permit to enter the country. The following comment on the incident appears in the *Deutsche Rundschau* (Bromberg): "Jan Kiepura, the Polish tenor, was recently given an ovation when he appeared in Berlin. The Polish tenor was presented to the German Chancellor and to the Minister for Propaganda in their boxes. What about our mutual understanding?"

von Küchler

No. 46 The German Consul at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, June 28, 1934

I have repeatedly had occasion to report that, although the ten-year pact between Germany and Poland has brought about a certain apparent détente, there has, apart from this, been no alteration in Poland's relation to Germany in my district, especially as regards the treatment of the minority.

This is evident in school affairs. For example, Paul Brien, a University-trained teacher at the only State Secondary School in Thorn where classes are conducted in German, was recently placed on the retired list. On investigation, I found that there were no pedagogical reasons for his dismissal, which seems to be part of the efforts of the Poles gradually to transform this ancient German school into a Polish one. One by one, Polish teachers have been substituted for Germans, but it had been hoped that this systematic process of transformation would cease as a result of the ten-year pact. With the enforced retirement of Herr Brien, the school staff will now consist of nine Polish and three German teachers. Under these circumstances the school can no longer be regarded as a German educational institution.

von Küchler

No. 47 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Kattowitz, August 1, 1934

At members' meeting of the German League, Prince von Pless, its President, made a speech in which he dealt with the existing relations between Germany and Poland and their effect on the position of the minority. The Prince declared that those who had hoped for immediate improvement in the situation as a result of German-Polish negotiations were doomed to disappointment, for long-standing antagonism could not be done away with overnight; but no one could have foreseen the position of the German community would become more critical instead of improving. The aggravation consisted chiefly in the increasing number of dismissals of German workers, who were thus deprived of their livelihood.

Nöldeke

III. Poland Evades the Supervision of Minorities by the League of Nations

(September to November, 1934)

No. 48 The German Consul at Geneva to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Geneva, September 7, 1934

The following noteworthy points emerge from a conversation yesterday with an important official in the League of Nations Secretariat about Polish motion regarding minorities:

1. In the opinion of the Secretariat there is no prospect of Poland's motion for the generalization of minorities protection being carried, because the Great Powers as well as other states are opposed to it.

2. The Secretariat is likewise of opinion that there is little prospect of Poland's being successful in demanding that she should be freed from the obligations imposed on her by the Minorities Treaty, if her motion for generalization of minorities protection is rejected. As a matter of fact, Poland, by citing her unilateral obligations under the Minorities Treaty, especially together with the fact that Russia when she joins the League of Nations will in all probability not have such obligations imposed on her, could demand the alteration of the minorities provisions under Article 12 of the Polish Minorities Treaty,* which would eventually be tantamount to cancelling them completely. For this, according to the conditions of Article 12, a simple majority in the League Council would be sufficient. Such an attempt might however be opposed by the Great Powers on the grounds that the minorities protection was a preliminary condition for the allocation of large territories to Poland and to the Little Entente, and that the cancellation of the treaties for the protection of minorities would open up the question of general revision. In the opinion of the Secretariat, the Little Entente as well as Greece are whole-heartedly disinclined to support the Polish motion as they are in a similar position regarding the interdependence of territorial and minorities questions.

Krauel

* Cf. No. 4.

No. 49 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, September 13, 1934

Consul Krauel has just telephoned from Geneva as follows:

Beck has just made a speech in the League Assembly which was devoted almost entirely to the minorities question and in which he declared that Poland must insist upon a generalization of the obligations with regard to minorities; he had, however, heard that several states would adopt an oppositional attitude. He was therefore, compelled to state that Poland would, in the future, refuse all co-operation which would assist international bodies in supervising her execution of the provisions for the protection of minorities.*

von Kamphoevener

No. 50 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, September 13, 1934

This afternoon the Polish Minister announced that he wished to see me on urgent business and called at 6.45 p. m. He had received a telegram from M. Beck, Polish Foreign Minister, with instructions to make a statement to us concerning M. Beck's denunciation of the Minorities Treaty at Geneva. The Minister had instructions to state that this step of which we were probably already informed through the medium

* Poland's announcement that she would cease to co-operate in the supervision by the League of Nations of the protection of minorities was met with formal objections on the part of the representatives of Great Britain and France in the League Assembly. On this occasion, Sir John Simon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Head of the British Delegation, made the following declaration at the plenary meeting of the fifteenth League of Nations Assembly on September 14, 1934:—

"The country which I and the United Kingdom delegation represent, together with some other Powers, is a party to the Polish Minorities Treaty. Poland accepted certain treaty obligations with regard to minorities which included the guarantee of the League of Nations. I would add, in this connection, that the terms of Article 93 of the Treaty of Versailles, coming as it does in that part of the Treaty dealing with the establishment of the boundaries of Poland, cannot be overlooked. Poland has further accepted a certain procedure which is laid down in certain Council resolutions as to the manner in which this guarantee should be exercised—a procedure which clearly implies the co-operation of Poland."

M. Barthou, French Minister for Foreign Affairs and Head of the French Delegation, made the following emphatic statement at the same meeting of the League of Nations Assembly:—

"The Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday raised a question concerning the future application of the Minorities Treaty concluded between Poland and the principal Allied Powers on June 28, 1919. Since this discussion has been opened, it is only natural that the other signatories to that Treaty should define their attitude. The representative of the United Kingdom has just done so in no uncertain terms. France, which was also a signatory of the Treaty of June 28, 1919, held the presidency of the Peace Conference during which it was concluded; I therefore consider myself bound in loyalty to associate myself entirely with Sir John Simon's conclusions."

of the press, in no way affected the relations of the Polish Government with the German minority and that the Polish laws concerning the minorities and their equality of rights within the Polish State would continue in force.

I told the Polish Minister that I took cognizance of his statement, but that at the same time I felt compelled to remark that we could not regard the second part of his declaration as satisfactory, since innumerable complaints from the German minority in Poland and an interminable succession of law-suits had proved that the Polish laws concerning the minorities were inadequate in practice. Consequently I reserved any pronouncement on the attitude of the German Government. The Minister replied that M. Beck's declaration was made in pursuance of the policy initiated two years ago, the object of which was a generalization of obligations towards the minorities. Poland could no longer submit to discrimination.

I told the Minister that M. Beck's declaration had come as a surprise to us. I had learned through the press that the Polish Foreign Minister had not waited to see what attitude the Powers would adopt towards his recent motion for a general minorities agreement. As regards ourselves, the German Government had last year stated that they were prepared on principle *si omnes* to conclude a general minorities agreement. I could not, I said, follow his line of thought concerning discrimination, since the special obligation imposed on Poland and other states with regard to the minorities was the counterpart of the boundary established at the Paris Peace Conference which was particularly unfavorable to the defeated states. I reminded him of the note addressed by M. Clemenceau on June 24, 1919 to M. Paderewski,* then Polish Premier. To this the Polish Minister could make no further reply.

von Bülow

No. 51 The State Secretary at the Foreign Office to the German Minister in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, September 15, 1934

Polish step in minorities question is judged here as follows:

Although M. Beck did not formally denounce the Minorities Treaty as such, but merely refused to co-operate further with the international bodies, his action virtually paralyzes the system for the protection of minorities. The stipulations for the protection of minorities in the treaties of 1919 were a compensation for the territorial adjustments made

* Cf. No. 3.

at that time. This is true of the German-Polish frontier in particular, as is shown by Article 93 of the Treaty of Versailles, the preamble to the Treaty for the Protection of Minorities and M. Clémenceau's well-known letter to M. Paderewski, dated June 24, 1919.* Obligation to protect minorities was assumed by new states in return for acquisition of new territories, so that cancellation of this obligation has in reality revived the whole territorial problem.

We have long realized that the guarantee of the League of Nations as regards the protection of minorities was practically worthless for us, and have, by our withdrawal from the League, renounced our claim to avail ourselves of this guarantee. This, however, in no way alters the fundamental significance of the Polish step and its connection with territorial problems.

Under the circumstances we shall have to lay particular stress on the fact that the League of Nations, which has already completely failed to cope with the problem of disarmament, is now floundering in its attempts to deal with the all-important question of the minorities. We shall watch with keen interest how the League of Nations and above all the former principal Allied Powers, as signatories to the treaties for the protection of minorities, deal with the problem and how they discharge their responsibilities. The statements made at Geneva by Sir John Simon and M. Barthou certainly sound very energetic, but this does not preclude the possibility that they may be merely eye-wash, and that the League of Nations will, according to the recognized Geneva custom, finally accept in some form or other the *fait accompli* staged by Poland. In order to provide against such contingencies we must constantly endeavor to nail down the League of Nations and the signatory Powers to their responsibilities for all time.

I add the following exclusively for your own information:

On the 13th inst. the Polish Minister, acting on instructions received from his Foreign Minister, informed me that the Geneva step had in no way affected the relations of the Polish Government with the German minority and that the Polish laws applying to the minorities and their equality of rights within the Polish State would remain in force. I replied that we could not regard this statement as satisfactory, since our past experience of the protection of the German minority in Poland had shown that Polish laws were inadequate in this respect.

I took cognizance of the Minister's statement but expressly reserved any pronouncement on the Reich Government's attitude. At the same time I pointed out the connection between the minorities problem and the territorial question as indicated above, and stressed the grave significance of the Polish step.

Bülow

* Cf. No. 3.

No. 52 The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, November 14, 1934

The attitude adopted by the Polish Government in Geneva practically amounts to a termination of the Treaty for the Protection of Minorities, since they refuse all co-operation with international bodies until a general and international system of minorities protection as proposed by them is put into force. A danger thus exists that the servitude imposed in 1919 upon the territories ceded by the Reich to Poland may be done away with, and that the whole status of eastern frontier questions is becoming materially aggravated to Germany's disadvantage. We cannot therefore simply submit in silence to Poland's unilateral alteration of existing conditions. Such silence could only be interpreted as a tacit acceptance on our part of the situation created by Poland's recent decision. Moreover, the oppressed condition of the German minority in Poland imperatively demands that the German Government make definite representations on the subject to the Polish Government.

Referring you to our conversation on the matter during your last visit to Berlin, I now request you to avail yourself of the earliest possible opportunity of calling on Foreign Minister Beck, and discussing the matter with him along the following lines:

1. The German Government are of the opinion that it would be appropriate to initiate frank and confidential discussions with the Polish Government on this question which, if it is passed over and remains unsolved, might easily lead to eventual misunderstanding and to an interruption of the recent auspicious improvement in German-Polish relations. This is our view of the situation created by the Polish Government's attitude in Geneva on the minorities question.

2. The Polish Government, as we have noted with gratification, considered it incumbent on them to approach the German Government on the matter, directly after the Geneva session, by instructing M. Lipski to inform State Secretary Bülow that the German minority in Poland would continue to enjoy in principal equality of rights in the future. M. Lipski's statement, however, has not clarified the situation sufficiently. For this reason Herr von Bülow would not commit himself, in the course of the conversation, on the attitude of the German Government.*

3. Please state that you are instructed to say from the outset that it is in no sense our intention to make Poland's refusal to co-operate with the League of Nations in minorities questions a subject for discussion as such, nor to bring the treatment of these questions into the international

* Cf. No. 50.

limelight again. We can regard the cooperation of the League of Nations with indifference, as we have long recognized its futility. Moreover, one of the main objectives of the German-Polish Agreement, concluded in January of this year, was to avoid the discussion of German-Polish questions before international bodies, but to negotiate them, instead, by a direct exchange of opinions. We can sympathize with Poland if she considers that her interests would not be served by an international system of control.

4. All this, however, does not alter the fact that the territories ceded to Poland by the Reich contain large numbers of inhabitants of German birth, and that the minority rights promised to these people form an integral part of the general settlement of 1919. It is impossible for Germany to disinterest herself in the fate of these groups. Such an attitude on her part would meet with no understanding at all among the German people. It is true that the German press, acting on the wishes of the Government and in the interests of German-Polish relations, has made but slight reference recently to the situation of the German minority in Poland, but this should not blind anyone to the fact that the fate of our fellow-Germans and their treatment by the Polish State and the people of Poland cannot be a matter of indifference to us.

5. The statement of these principles is to be the main purpose of your *démarche.* In order to forestall any misinterpretation of this *démarche,* please state that you are empowered to declare that the German Government have not the slightest intention of making their support of the interest of the German minority in Poland in any sense a lever for raising frontier questions. We hope that the Polish Government will duly appreciate this declaration. By it, and by the fact that we have disinterested ourselves in the question of League of Nations control we are creating a basis on which minorities questions can be discussed just as frankly by Germany and Poland as they are, for instance, by Germany and Hungary. Any acrimonious tone in these discussions is therefore obviated from the outset. At the same time this problem, which must be admitted to exist between the two States, can be prevented from assuming proportions which may one day cause it to become a disturbing factor in the development of their mutual relations.

6. Please state that although your first discussion is to deal in the main with the fundamental aspect of the matter, you would like to use the opportunity to point out that a large number of complaints have just recently been received from the German minority in Poland, which prove that the Polish laws are hardly effective enough and that the practice of the Polish authorities does not correspond with the intentions expressed by the Polish Government.

If M. Beck, like M. Lipski, tries to evade the issue by assuring you that the minority will be properly treated, at the same time emphasizing

the fact that the whole problem is exclusively the concern of Polish autonomy, you are asked to point out to him that the legal foundation—i. e. stipulations in international treaties or clauses in Polish autonomous laws—on which a fair treatment of the minority is based does not concern us nearly so much as the actual *fact* that it be accorded such treatment.

Should M. Beck in the course of your conversation revert to the problem of the Polish minority in the Reich, you should draw his attention to the fact that this question lies in another dimension. A comparison is not possible for the simple reason that the situation of the Polish minority in the Reich has gradually improved, in consequence of the good will spontaneously shown by Germany, while that of the German minority in Poland unfortunately grows steadily worse as the years pass by. In true accord with the repeated declarations made by the Fuehrer and Chancellor, the German nation loves its own people, yet also respects foreign culture and traditions. The National-Socialist State has given tangible proof of this principle in its treatment of the Polish minority living in the Reich.

I look forward with special interest to your report concerning the execution of this order and the reception of your *démarche.*

Frhr. von Neurath

No. 53 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, November 19, 1934

In accordance with your instructions I called on M. Beck today to discuss the attitude adopted by the Polish Government on the minorities question. I emphasized our wish for an improvement in German-Polish relations and I impressed upon him that my present *démarche* was also made for this ultimate purpose. In this connection I informed him that the Fuehrer had exhibited particular interest in the question. After pointing out the unfortunate position of the German minority, I requested him to issue emphatic instructions to subordinate bodies and thus bring it about that the actual treatment of the minority should accord with the spirit of our policy.

M. Beck, who at no time during my statements betrayed particular surprise or uneasiness, replied somewhat as follows:

In the first place he desired to express the great regard felt in Poland for the German Chancellor as well as the high appreciation of his courageous and loyal attitude towards the German-Polish problem. The

esteem felt for the Chancellor was general and what he had told me in that respect expressed not only his personal convictions but—as he had again convinced himself only a few days ago—those of Marshal Pilsudski and of the Polish Premier. I could therefore rest assured that any suggestion coming from the Chancellor or his Government was certain to find careful, unprejudiced and favorable consideration here. With reference to the Polish declaration in Geneva on the minorities question, he felt impelled to emphasize once more that this step was in no sense directed against the German minority. It was called forth on the contrary by the incredible treatment which the League of Nations had recently seen fit to accord to Poland. The League numbered among its representatives persons who only seemed capable of causing annoyance to others and to themselves and who had no understanding at all for actual facts. For a whole year he had been trying to show the League by his words and his deeds that Poland would no longer submit to such treatment and that things could not continue as they were. Geneva's complete lack of understanding had forced Poland to make her declaration, and he was gratified to learn from my remarks that we showed understanding for Poland's point of view. All this, however, had nothing to do with the German minority. He assured me that the rights of the minority would continue to be protected by the Polish Constitution. These rights, which would doubtless be transferred in the near future from the old Constitution to the new, were not founded on theoretical considerations but corresponded to Poland's conception of the state and of the co-existence in it of various population groups. In his opinion these principles were far more than empty words. We certainly were going through a serious economic crisis, which perhaps tended to bring a certain amount of tension into relations between the State's nationals and the minority. But he was convinced that this too would improve. If everything was not yet as it should be in the lower ranks of the administration, he was quite ready to speak to his colleagues and urge them once more to communicate to their subordinates their view of the situation, which coincided with the principles he had already laid down. This he hoped would have the desired effect. Much responsibility of course rested with the press and it was only natural that a press which contained as many Jewish representatives as the Polish, should exhibit a certain resentment towards Germany. But he would do what he could to improve matters and he hoped that, even in the minority question, public opinion would gradually arrive at a more reasonable standpoint.

The Foreign Minister closed his account of his "theoretical" conception of the problem with the question whether I could point to a few concrete instances in the treatment of the minority which we felt constituted a grievance. I answered that my instructions so far only covered discussion of the theoretical aspect of the problem and that they did not specify which incidents my Government had in mind when they referred

to the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. I was ready to obtain further instructions and was prepared for my own part to lay before him some aspects of the problem as presented to me by information occasionally received here. I then broached the school question, pointing out the difficulties experienced by school organizations in maintaining their schools, and furthermore touched upon the incomprehensible transfer of capable school directors to the eastern provinces and their replacement by unsuitable persons. I then mentioned the restrictions placed on teaching in the German language, which, though I quite understood the Polish wish that members of the minority should have a thorough command of the Polish language, seemed to me grossly exaggerated. They meant in practice that the schools belonging to the German minority could scarcely be regarded as German educational institutions any longer. I proceeded to discuss the Upper Silesian situation in detail, mentioning especially the numerous dismissals of workers and employees, due in most instances to their frank confession of loyalty to the German minority. In many cases it was unfortunately true that those who made no secret of belonging to the minority had to suffer severely for it and were regarded by subordinate officials as disloyal members of the State, an opinion which I could scarcely regard as shared by those in high authority. In particular I referred him to the activities of the Insurgents League which, in the resolutions passed at its periodic meetings, repeatedly demanded the abolition of minority schools and the persecution of all who still dared to send their children to a German school. The impression made on me by all this was that very little of the new spirit of conciliation was to be found among numerous bodies of subordinate officials as well as in certain circles of the population; I would be most grateful if M. Beck's intention was to gain general recognition for the doubtless entirely different view of the situation held in Warsaw.

I concluded our discussion by thanking M. Beck for the sympathetic way in which he had listened to my remarks and, once more emphasizing the value of frank discussion, told him that on future occasions I should again approach him with confidence in this matter. He nodded in reply to this.

As I mentioned before, this conversation appears to confirm the fact that the Poles show full understanding for our interest in the German minority and that the present wholesale suppression in the German press of news concerning minority problems is not necessary to further German-Polish relations, but on the contrary tends to arouse suspicion. Following your instructions to mention our press policy, I again told M. Beck in our conversation today that our press was experiencing growing difficulty in preserving its restraint, which corresponded too little with the sentiments of the general public.

von Moltke

No. 54 The German Consul at Cracow to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Cracow, November 3, 1934

Between October 31 and November 2, 1934, there was a congress here dealing with problems affecting Pommerellen; this congress was arranged by the Baltic Institute of Thorn. The number of visitors varied between 150 and 170 persons and so exceeded the expectation of those who had arranged the congress. There were specially represented at this congress: the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, the Minorities Department of the Ministry for Home Affairs, the Commissariat-General of the Republic of Poland in Danzig, the Voivode Departments of Posen, Pommerellen, Silesia, and Bialystok, the rural *Starostas* of Pommerellen, the towns of Thorn and Gdynia, all Polish universities, the Polish Academy of Science in Cracow, the Society of the Friends of Science and Art of Danzig, several scientific institutes, archives, and libraries of Gdynia, Posen and Thorn, and some institutes of Warsaw. The Chamber of Agriculture of Pommerellen, the Supervising Association of the agricultural co-operative societies of Pommerellen, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Warsaw, and the State Agrarian Bank were represented in particularly large numbers. Further the Marine and Colonial League, the Association of Teachers of secondary schools and colleges, and almost all the more important local organizations of the West Marches Society sent representatives. Morever, three Colonels in uniform attended the meeting.

The attached report was sent to me by a person who had attended the congress.

Schillinger

Appendix

Extract

. . . . . At the commencement of the second day's proceedings Professor Pawlowski expressed his regret in an opening address that this very important problem of settlements in Pommerellen had not yet been approached from a political point of view, for the purpose of the congress was to show those who were practically dealing with the

matter how to carry on the struggle for the Polish soil and the Polish character of the country.

In the discussion which followed the Director of the Department for Agriculture and Agrarian Reform of the Voivodeship of Pommerellen, M. Ceceniowski, took the floor and stated that, during the year 1933, 3,500 hectares and, during the year 1934, 4,000 hectares had been split up into plots, whereas in 1935, 9,000 hectares would be split up; of this ground only 3,000 hectares were property of the Polish State or Polish private individuals.

M. Smolenski, of Cracow, mentioned that at the present time seven ninths of all the large estates were in the hands of Germans. There were, indeed, still localities where the settlement of a very small number of Germans would suffice to convert the Polish majority into a minority. He was pleased to hear that these decisive arguments had been recognized and that, therefore, in 1935 6,000 hectares would be expropriated from German owners and divided into smaller plots.

M. Pawlowski called particular attention to the great preponderance of German property-owners in the districts of Dirschau, Stargard, Graudenz, Culm, Zempelburg, and in the Sea District. The present state of affairs was by no means satisfactory, and a change in the situation must be effected as quickly as possible. The Germans in these localities were being economically strengthened by the exploitation of the Danzig market. From now on, however, the latter would be impossible, thanks to the Compensation Agreement between Danzig and Poland,* because the apportionment of quotas would in the future be regulated by the Polish authorities.

In the discussion it was mentioned that means were lacking for establishing settlements, whereas the position of the German owners of estates was being strengthened by credits. At this point a colonel in uniform took the floor, and stated that money ought not to play any part in the matter. One should not become a victim of false hopes by reason of the Agreement with Germany. On the contrary, this agreement had value only in so far as at the end of ten years nothing would remain which could be regarded as dangerous for this territory. Such conditions as prevailed in the districts of Dirschau, Stargard, and Zempelburg were impossible. No consideration could be taken, no hindrances of any kind tolerated. The present lull ought to be exploited for establishing as many settlements as possible in the frontier districts; thus would arise a living bulwark of defense consisting of Polish peasants.

M. Dykier, the President of the Chamber of Agriculture of Thorn, emphasized these statements once more, and added that there were two weapons available against the Germans residing in the country; to wit, first, to split up their estates into plots, and, second, to purchase their land. These two weapons had up to the present not been fully utilized. . . . . .

* Cf. No. 181.

No. 55 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, February 18, 1935

Agrarian Reform has now again been applied in the main against the Germans. Of the estates which are to be compulsorily split up into plots for the year 1935, out of a total of 11,250 hectares, 6,797 hectares have been expropriated from German possession, that is to say almost 60 per cent. of this total area of land, although the proportion of German estates in the severed territories of the West amounts to scarcely more than 30 per cent.

Lütgens

No. 56 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with the Polish Ambassador

Memorandum

(Translation)

Berlin, February 21, 1935

On the occasion of a visit which the Polish Ambassador paid me today in connection with another matter, I mentioned to him the policy of de-Germanizing which was being carried on by the Voivode of Upper Silesia. I explained to him what a great danger the continuation of this policy would be for relations between Germany and Poland, and requested him to draw the urgent attention of his Government to the fact that, if the Poles continued the large-scale dismissals of German workers now being carried out particularly in the Pless and Henckel-Donnersmarck concerns, this must naturally influence the attitude of the German authorities towards Polish workmen and employees in Germany. I explained to the Ambassador that the cordial development of Polish-German relations following the Agreement of last year, would certainly be jeopardized by a continuation of the de-Germanizing policy in Upper Silesia.

The Ambassador promised to inform M. Beck of my remarks immediately, and to request him to draw the attention of the Polish Government to the serious state of affairs. He said he was convinced that M. Beck would do everything in his power to prevent the local authorities in their over-zealousness from doing anything which could adversely affect the relations between Germany and Poland.

Frhr. von Neurath

No. 57 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with the Polish Ambassador

Memorandum

(Translation)

Berlin, March 12, 1935

The Polish Ambassador informed me this morning on behalf of M. Beck that the latter, as a result of my complaint about the efforts being made in Upper Silesia to carry out the policy of de-Germanization, and especially about the dismissal of numerous German employees and workmen, had taken energetic steps with the local Polish authorities; he requested me to treat this communication as strictly confidential. M. Beck hoped that these measures would result in the cessation of the numerous dismissals.

Frhr. von Neurath

No. 58 The German Consul at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Thorn, April 16, 1935

On Saturday, the 13th inst., a Polish meeting was held in Neustadt at which the Mayor called upon the assembly for solidarity. Meeting developed into serious agitation against German minorities and various speakers delivered provocative speeches.

As the result of the agitation the people became excited and could no longer be restrained, and then marched through the town, smashing twenty-three large shop windows and a great number of other windows belonging to Germans.

Similar meetings took place in other parts of the Sea District. In Kleinkatz there were serious brawls on Saturday as the result of a similar demonstration in the course of which several people of German birth were seriously injured; one of them by name Groen died on Monday in the hospital at Zoppot.

Küchler

No. 59 The German Consul at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, April 18, 1935

In continuation of my wire of the April 16, 1935,* I have the honor to make the following supplementary report:

The wild excesses of aroused Polish nationalists in the Sea District have justly led to great excitement and bitterness among the German minority. The police have completely failed in the face of the disturbances and it would appear as if they had been instructed not to interfere. The conduct of the *Starosta* of Neustadt is very strange. For when the President of the local branch of the *Deutsche Vereinigung* (German Association) wished to visit him the day after the occurrences, Starosta refused to receive him.

The occurrences in the Sea District are profoundly regrettable and reprehensible. The chief blame attaches to the authorities, for before their very eyes irresponsible agitators were allowed to stir up the lowest instincts of the masses.

von Küchler

No. 60 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, April 18, 1935

On Saturday, the 13th inst., the German farmer Rudolf Rieck of Neuhütte, in the district of Ostrowo, was attacked by unknown individuals and so severely injured that he died shortly afterward. The police investigations are not yet completed. It can, however, now be regarded as certain that it was exclusively political motives which led to the crime. As is understandable the minority is greatly excited as a result of the incident.

By Order

von Tucher

* Cf. No. 58.

No. 61 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

Berlin, July 1, 1935

Prince Lubomirski, First Secretary at the Polish Embassy, visited me at my request and I made the following communication to him in accordance with instructions:

The question of dismissals of workmen in Upper Silesia is one which for some years has been the object of considerable controversy between the German and Polish Governments. In recent years there have been a series of *démarches* on the part of Herr v. Moltke the German Ambassador in Warsaw, as also here in Berlin. The purpose of these *démarches* was to put an end to the dismissals of workmen which in our opinion constitute a breach of the Agreement and handicap relations between Germany and Poland. In February of the current year the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs again requested the Polish Ambassador to visit him and pointed out that these dismissals in Polish Upper Silesia, which constitute a breach of the Agreement, must be terminated.* Ambassador Lipski declared a few weeks later, on the instructions of M. Beck, that energetic steps had been taken with the local Polish authorities for the purpose of putting an end to the dismissals.** Nevertheless the dismissals had been continued. Complaint was again made on April 11 of this year to the Polish Ambassador, and attention was again drawn to the fact that these dismissals were incompatible with the declaration which M. Lipski had made on behalf of M. Beck. Prince Lubomirski had then, after referring the matter to Warsaw, stated that the declarations of M. Beck were intended to apply only to the future and not to the past. It was thereupon explained to him that Herr v. Neurath could not accept this view of the case, and that he reserved to himself the right to revert to the matter. The dismissals continued even after April 1; indeed, even after July 1 notices of dismissal were given for September 30.

Prince Lubormirski, on receiving these statements, merely maintained that, according to his information, all the dismissals were to be attributed to economic causes. He further promised to inform his Government of our view of the case, and to inform himself thoroughly concerning the extent and the grounds of the dismissals in Upper Silesia.

von Lieres

* Cf. No. 56.
** Cf. No. 57.

No. 62 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, October 16, 1935

It seems to me necessary to the interest of the German minority, and probably not detrimental to our policy of friendly understanding in Poland, that the German public should concern itself more deeply than it has in the past with the fate of that minority. The Poles had formerly often emphasized that the treatment of the German minority would be fundamentally changed if there were no irredentist movement among this minority, and if Germany no longer pursued a revisionist policy. Unfortunately, however, the attitude of the Poles towards the German minority has not changed even since the policy of friendly understanding began to be pursued. For the struggle is still going on all along the line, even if occasionally a more conciliatory manner is adopted. The Poles are at the present time still striving consistently to attain the same end which, as was characteristically and candidly stated by the *Burg Starosta* of Posen in the course of a recent conversation with a reliable person, consists in carrying out completely the policy of de-Germanization within two generations at the latest. As a matter of fact, the friendly agreement has perhaps even further accelerated the speed, the Poles desiring at the end of the ten years to create a *fait accompli.*

Nevertheless I do not consider it to be desirable for us to change our previous policy in regard to the Polish minority in Germany; on the contrary, I am of the opinion that if the Poles in Germany were more severely treated, this could not but have unfavorable consequences for the German minority in Poland; for then the last checks on the Polish minority policy would be removed. Further, in consideration of the renewed interest which the Polish Government now have for the Polish minority in Germany, there would be reason to fear an undesirable reaction upon relations between Germany and Poland. Therefore the policy of the Reich in regard to the Polish minority in Germany ought to continue to be generous, while at the same time sharply resisting all irredentist activity.

However, in order to put an end to the repression of the German minority in Poland, now being carried on with a view to destroying this minority, it will be necessary to limit the degree of our readiness to come to a friendly understanding with Poland in this respect. At present the German minority in Poland has the feeling that it is being left in the lurch by the Reich, and even the Poles think that they need no longer restrain themselves in their action against the German minority; for in the absence of any reaction in the German press they cannot fail to have

the impression that all their excesses are being tolerated without protest by German public opinion. The Poles, who for their part by the creation of a World Union of Poles, have shown what their view is concerning the intimate racial connections between the minorities, would in my opinion reconcile themselves to the fact that we, too, cannot be indifferent to the state of our fellow-countrymen abroad. There is no reason for assuming that the policy of friendly understanding between Germany and Poland would be prejudiced if the German press were to discuss, cooly and moderately, the excesses being committed against the German minority in Poland. Only when the Poles feel that the limit of German patience has been reached, will the possibility exist that they will decide to bring their minority policy into harmony with the policy of friendly understanding. This would also further the realization of our desire for improving our political relations with Poland.

von Moltke

No. 63 The German Representative in the Mixed Commission for Upper Silesia to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Beuthen, January 3, 1936

We have another communication in regard to the point of view of President Calonder on the question of dismissals of workmen (complaint in the case of Joh. Groner).*

In this case the President insists more emphatically than in previous ones that the Poles in the case of dismissals of workmen have been proceeding arbitrarily and discriminating according to whether the workmen belong to the majority or minority. He also expressly emphasizes that the numerous cases of complaint make it clear that many Polish concerns are pursuing a dismissal policy hostile to the German minority, and that this general condition is well known to the Polish Commissioner for Demobilization (page 7). An exact survey of the movement of personnel of the Max Colliery between January 1, 1933 and December 31, 1934, demonstrated conclusively that in this case the concern in question and the Commissioner for Demobilization are guilty of arbitrary and discriminating action to the prejudice of the German minority (pages 7 and 8). The President further points out that the Commissioner for Demobilization had given his consent to far more dismissals of workmen than the economic situation demanded. These dismissals are therefore

* Published in the "Amtliche Sammlung der Stellungnahmen des Präsidenten der Gemischten Kommission für Oberschlesien" (Official Collection of Rulings of the President of the Mixed Commission for Upper Silesia) published by Walther de Gruyter & Co., Berlin and Leipzig 1937, Vol. II, p. 461 ff.

not in accordance with the legal regulations. As proof he mentions the undisputed fact that a great number of those dismissed from the Max Colliery were supplemented by new employees with the result that almost all employees belonging to the minority, to wit 66 out of 71, were eliminated, and, in a high percentage of the cases, replaced by individuals belonging to the majority (pages 11 and 11a). Thus the systematic endeavors of the concern to substitute employees of the majority for those openly acknowledging their membership in the minority becomes quite clear. The Commissioner for Demobilization has not opposed this procedure; on the contrary, one is driven to the conclusion that he has associated himself with what the concern is doing (page 12).

Nöldeke

No. 64 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, February 18, 1936

Yesterday the official List of Names for Agrarian Reform for 1936 appeared.

The estates subject to compulsory division into plots in Pommerellen include German estates to the extent of 4,784 hectares, and Polish estates to the extent of 2,900 hectares. This alone is a clear proof of the unfair treatment of German property in comparison with Polish.

As a result of these circumstances the German minority has fallen into a state of the greatest depression, because it realizes only too clearly how Poland is interpreting and carrying out the friendly agreement between Germany and Poland. The Polish aim is to break up as many German estates as possible before the end of the ten-year period of the Agreement. This means that the estates, thus divided, will no longer be able to employ our German fellow-countrymen, so that these will be forced into misery and will try to emigrate. The prospects of the Germans being able to survive here are the worst conceivable, and it is a question as to whether it would not be possible to make clear to the competent authorities the extremely serious manner in which the relations between Germany and Poland are being jeopardized by the continued chicanery and by the measures employed against the Germans in the ceded districts. It is clearly evident from the recent publications, concerning which I had occasion to report, that it is intended to dispossess all Germans of their property entirely. This policy of destruction and dispossession must be stopped, otherwise all that is German here will soon be extinct.

von Küchler

No. 65 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, April 4, 1936

The numerous anti-German demonstrations which have lately been organized here by different Polish associations and parties, particularly by the West Marches Society, have caused President Calonder to request M. Steblowski, the Polish member on the Mixed Commission, to visit him, and to draw his urgent attention to the dangerous consequences which could arise from these demonstrations. President Calonder pointed out that the population is being put into a state of increased excitement by the numerous demonstrations of protest and that this, as is known by experience, could easily lead to acts of violence on the part of irresponsible individuals. He has further requested M. Steblowski to inform the Voivode, Dr. Grazynski, of his fears and to ask him to exert his influence as the situation demands.

In two cases the excitement caused among the population has already led to occurrences in the course of which Germans were physically maltreated and injured. On Sunday, March 15, there was a meeting at the hotel Graf Reden in Königshütte of the local branch of the German Building Association, which was broken up by rabble armed with clubs and sticks. In the course of these event some German employees of the provincial theatre of Upper Silesia, who had nothing to do with the meeting but who were merely engaged in the preparation of a theatrical performance, were attacked and mishandled. On March 29, near the town of Rybnik, a group of Germans were attacked and beaten with clubs and sticks by Young Insurgents in uniform.*

Nöldeke

No. 66 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, May 18, 1936

In the course of the anti-German actions which have been recently committed both by the authorities and also by the West Marches Society with the tacit consent of the authorities, a new blow has been

* Refers to a semi-military and anti-German youth organization. (Translator's note.)

delivered against the Germans here. It has been decided in a short decree not only to close all the local groups of the *Deutsche Vereinigung* in the Sea District—to wit Neustadt, Putzig, Hela, Krokau, and Smasin—and thereby to prevent them from functioning in the future, but also to liquidate them, to dissolve them altogether.

The *Deutsche Vereinigung* and its local groups have been, as has been reported more than once, the frequent object if chicanery on the part of the authorities. They have, therefore, avoided doing anything which could possibly give rise to any kind of objection, in order not to increase further the tension between Germans and Poles which has always existed and which is, at the present moment, reaching a particularly acute stage. However, the authorities see a military parade of dangerous character even in an outing where the participants proceed through the streets three and four abreast, like school-children.

Seeing that, in the light of the foregoing, the Polish authorities in my district are quite obviously departing from the line of reconciliation and friendly understanding and are frankly preaching a policy of hostility, ruin, and destruction against the Germans, whereas Germany is still patiently following out the policy of coming to an understanding with Poland, it seems to me urgently necessary, considering the frequent incidents, to insist upon a change of attitude here.

von Küchler

No. 67 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with the Polish Ambassador

Memorandum

(Translation)

Berlin, November 13, 1936

On the occasion of his visit today I drew the attention of the Polish Ambassador to the unpleasant occurrences in Gdynia, where anti-German demonstrations on a large scale had been organized by military clubs and officials' associations. M. Lipski expressed his profound regret at these incidents, particularly at the meeting in Gdynia, to which I had drawn his particular attention. I further told the Ambassador that I was compelled to lodge vigorous complaints to be made in Warsaw in view of these demonstrations. What was particularly serious in the case of the meeting at Gdynia was the fact that officials and even officers in uniform participated, and that not only were Germany and Danzig attacked, but even the person of the Fuehrer was assailed in a most unheard-of manner.

Frhr. von Neurath

No. 68 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, November 18, 1936

In my conversation with M. Beck today I drew his serious attention to the increasing tension of the political atmosphere in the relations with Germany during the last few months. Among other things I mentioned the inflammatory polemics in the Polish press, the increasing severity in the treatment of the German minority (secondary schools at Graudenz and Bromberg) as also the incident * at Gdynia, and in this connection I led our conversation to the Danzig question. While referring to Poland's increasingly obvious tendency to arrogate to herself new rights in Danzig,** I further complied with the instructions which I had received from the Fuehrer and Chancellor by expressing the view that, if this kind of procedure continued, there would be serious results; the relations between Germany and Poland would inevitably be disturbed. The Fuehrer and Chancellor, I told him, regarded the friendly Agreement between Germany and Poland as a very important contribution to peace, and desired its continuation. For this Agreement was one of the fundamental principles of German foreign policy. M. Beck replied that he was pleased to receive this most valuable declaration.

M. Beck declared further that he, too, regarded the recent attitude of the press as harmful, and that he was for his part prepared to do all he could in order to bring about an improvement in the unsatisfactory political atmosphere. He hoped that in Germany efforts would be made in the same direction. As regards the regrettable incidents in Gdynia he was not in a position to give an answer before looking into the case, for the details which I had communicated were unknown to him. All he knew was, that the Voivode had immediately intervened, and, for one thing, had prevented a report of these matters from appearing in the press.

Moltke

No. 69 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, November 26, 1936

Marshal Smigly-Rydz received me yesterday in the presence of the Foreign Minister.

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* Cf. No. 67.
** Cf. Nos. 188 and 189.

I conveyed to him the greetings of the Fuehrer and Chancellor and thereupon made the same statements as in my conversation with M. Beck on November 18.*

The Marshal expressed his interest in the development of Germany, which was blessed with a great leader. With regard to the relations between Germany and Poland he shared the view of the Fuehrer and Chancellor, that the Agreement of 1934 was most valuable for a better understanding between the two neighbors, as well as for the peace of Europe. He, too, regretted that the favorable influence, which this policy had exerted upon public opinion in both countries, had suffered a certain reverse during the last months; but he was convinced that this was only a temporary phenomenon. Influence upon the press, he said, was unfortunately subject to limitations. But everything possible would be done, and furthermore he could assure me that the Government would in no wise suffer themselves to be influenced by the press of the opposition. As regards Danzig he stated that Poland merely wanted to see that her interests there were not jeopardized. On these fundamental principles, he thought, it should not be difficult to settle all separate questions to the satisfaction of both Danzig and Poland. In conclusion he requested me to convey to the Fuehrer and Chancellor his assurance that he would adhere to the line of policy laid down by Marshal Pilsudski, and was determined to continue in the future the policy of coming to an understanding.

Moltke

No. 70 The German Consul-General at Posen to the German Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, November 23, 1936

A feverish activity in the stirring up of hatred against Germany is becoming evident throughout my district. All about, one sees people standing in groups. The countless meetings which are being held are supposed to be for the purpose of "enlightening" the population; as a matter of fact these are incendiary meetings of so-called patriotic associations, as for instance the West Marches Society, the Association of Reservists, of legionnaires, of railway men, and the Rifle Clubs. As if by command they all talk in a most contemptuous way about the Germans, and provoke the population against all that is German. One has the feeling of being back again in that long-dead past, when the acute political tension between Poland and her western neighbors was stirring up

* Cf. No. 68.

people's feelings to unbridled insults and degrading calumnies, which made the powerless and defenceless Germans the victims of spiteful attacks and acts of violence. At the moment, people here have quite forgotten that Germany and Poland have entered into an agreement for the specific purpose of fostering a more sympathetic mutual estimate, and effecting thereby a *rapprochement* between the German and Polish peoples. Unfortunately the contrary has happened. The most appalling part of this state of affairs is, that the recent violent wave of anti-Germanism and of active menaces against Germans is spreading under the very eyes of the highest authorities (Voivode Administration, Army Command); not only is this being tolerated by them, but there are also signs that they are directly supporting it, not to mention the fact that officials on duty and members of the regular Army have actively participated in demonstrations of all kinds. I have already reported about the agitation going on in military associations, which are very influential here. The West Marches Society, whose anti-German agitations I have repeatedly reported and observe even now in all country districts, is naturally playing no passive part.

Reinebeck

No. 71 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, December 22, 1936

In pursuance of the discussion of the question concerning the emigration of German-born Polish citizens from Poland to the Reich, I have the honor to attach herewith for your information a copy of a resolution passed by the members of the General Association of Trade Unions of German Employees in Polish Upper Silesia, in regard to questions dealt with by the Labor Exchange. The resolution shows that not only the workmen but also the employees belonging to the German minority are in serious distress.

Nöldeke

Appendix

Today in Königshütte, at a meeting of the General Association of Trade Unions of German Employees in Polish Upper Silesia, the members present adopted the following resolution:

> The state of distress prevailing among German employees in Upper Silesia is becoming worse every month and has recently assumed

calamitous proportions. The de-Germanization of heavy industry, as well as of trade and commerce, are systematically depriving the Germans of every possibility of labor; furthermore, many families have been given notice to quit the factory dwellings, and are consequently put upon the street.

Among the families of those dismissed, need and privation have assumed insupportable proportions. The hopeless position is reaching a state of desperation owing to the well-known fact that the dismissed Germans will never again have the possibility of earning their living in Poland.

The condition of the German youth in our district is not better, for they have no chances of being apprenticed or employed. The few youths and girls, who in the past have found apprenticeships or positions, are now being systematically driven out of their apprenticeships and occupations, by every conceivable means, at the hands of the different Polish organizations.

By reason of the facts mentioned we commission the Managing Committee of the General Association of Trade Unions of German Employees to inform all concerned about our present situation and to induce them to assist the Germans in Upper Silesia to find a new means of existence.

Königshütte (Polish Upper Silesia), November 15, 1936.

No. 72 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, December 22, 1936

At the annual meeting of the Polish West Marches Society which, is well known to be playing a prominent part in the ruthless fight against Germanism, the Voivode, Dr. Grazynski, who is an honorary member, delivered an address in which he referred to the successful de-Germanizing of heavy industry and demanded that henceforth trade and commerce in East Upper Silesia be de-Germanized in like manner. Further he demanded that the Polish farmer be made exclusive lord of the soil in the Polish districts of the West. Colonel Powierza took part as representative of the military authorities in the proceedings of the meeting, and in the name of the Divisional Commander promised the West Marches Society complete military support in the achievement of its aims. A colonel of the Bielitz garrison was elected president of the Teschen (Silesia) chapter.

In the course of the meeting a number of highly objectionable resolutions were adopted. These resolutions have caused serious anxiety in local German circles, particularly in view of the personal attitude of the Voivode. The resolutions are rightly considered as a preliminary to a great attack being organized by the Voivode against German landowners and the German middle-class. It is significant that the meeting came to an end with an expression of appreciation for the great services rendered by the Voivode, the West Marches Society thanking him for his good will and requesting his further support and help for the future.

Nöldeke

No. 73 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with M. Beck, Polish Foreign Minister

Memorandum

(Translation)

Berlin, January 20, 1937

M. Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, visited me this morning, while passing through Berlin on his way to Geneva. We took the opportunity to discuss, among other things, the attitude of the Polish press.

I called M. Beck's attention to the fact that even a large part of the Polish press, which is inspired by the Government, has, during the last few months, been very unfriendly toward Germany. I stated that we had imposed upon the German press the duty of remaining very reserved in regard to this unfriendly tone, but that I would request him to use his influence to cause the official Polish press to change its tone. This matter evidently caused M. Beck embarrassment. He endeavored to excuse the matters objected to on the ground of internal political difficulties in Poland.

Frhr. von Neurath

No. 74 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, March 4, 1937

As has already been reported, the Polish authorities are again taking various measures against the Germans here. It is evident from these measures that there is not, on the part of the Poles, the same desire for an understanding that we feel. Seeing that the feeling against the Germans here is continually becoming more violent, the German minority is beginning to notice the regrettable fact that the friendly Agreement has

produced no good results for it. The following are a number of measures recently resorted to against the Germans:

1. This year, as in previous years, the greatest blow against the Germans was the Agrarian Reform. But this year it has been directed against them in a far more severe and undisguised form. For 75.5 per cent of the whole area of land which is being expropriated, is to be taken from German property, although the entire German holdings no longer amount to more than 30 per cent.
2. There is further to be an attack of increased violence on the German co-operative societies. The Polish West Marches Society which has repeatedly and insistently agitated against the German co-operative societies, is probably again behind this. There is further the fact that the co-operative societies of the German minority, in spite of all the pressure, are, on the whole, in a comparatively prosperous condition, and therefore are working effectively; whereas the Polish co-operative societies here are in a very bad way. It is clear that these things anger the Poles.
3. Further, the parents of German school-children are being subjected to new chicanery. For instance, 26 children have been removed from the German private school in Neustadt by order of the District School Inspector, and have been transferred to the Polish school despite the protests of the parents. There are also complaints from other parts of my district about similar incidents, which for the most part are to be attributed to chicanery, and aim at wearing down the endurance of the German parents.

I consider it my duty to draw your serious attention to the situation which has been created by the recent anti-German measures of the authorities.

von Küchler

No. 75 Memorandum of the Director of the Political Department of the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, April 2, 1937

Herr Pfundtner, State Secretary at the Reich Ministry for Home Affairs, has informed the acting State Secretary by telephone that, according to news received, a hunger march to the German frontier is being planned for the near future by portions of the German population of Polish Upper Silesia. All precautionary measures have been taken to prevent possible frontier incidents.

von Erdmannsdorff

No. 76 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Thorn, April 6, 1937

In several meetings held at Graudenz by the ill-famed West Marches Society, a speaker demanded German land east and west of Pommerellen. Have protested to the Voivodeship, but request that you also protest.

Küchler

No. 77 The Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, April 7, 1937

Reich Minister requests to lodge immediate strong protest with Polish Government against Polish demands for German territory as expressed in speeches and resolutions or by transparences and maps at recent Graudenz demonstrations * held by West Marches Society in Pommerellen Week. Request you to base the protest not only on Press Protocol ** between Germany and Poland, but further to emphasize that demonstrations of this kind in which high Polish officials take part are very prejudicial to relations between Germany and Poland. Reich Government must demand that Polish Government do all in their power to prevent recurrence of such incidents.***

Gaus

No. 78 Memorandum of the Acting State Secretary at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, April 9, 1937

I informed the Polish Ambassador, whom I had requested to call on me, of the *démarche* taken yesterday by Herr von Moltke in Warsaw upon

* Cf. No. 76.

** Press Agreement of February 24, 1934, between Germany and Poland for the purpose of bringing public opinion into harmony with friendly Agreement between Germany and Poland.

*** The "démarche" of the German Ambassador was lodged with Count Czembek, Polish Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, on April 8th, (Cf. No. 78.)

our instruction, regarding the anti-German activity of the Polish West Marches Society. I told M. Lipski that we appreciated the disapproval of this activity by the Polish Government and their dissociating themselves from the action of the West Marches Society, as expressed by Count Czembek to Herr von Moltke and as published in the *communiqué* of the Polish Telegraph Agency, and that this incident could be regarded as settled. I then took advantage of the occasion to explain in detail to M. Lipski, in a friendly but earnest and emphatic manner, how greatly hostile demonstrations against Germany on the part of Poles and Polish newspapers had recently been increasing, and how seriously the relations between Germany and Poland were being handicapped by such demonstrations.

Dieckhoff

No. 79 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, April 7, 1937

In the district of Soldau agitation is again being carried on with increased violence against everything German, and the population are being called upon to boycott the Germans and the Jews. At the end of last month placards with the following words appeared in Soldau during the night:

"Do not buy from Germans and Jews!
If you do not comply with this demand,
you will feel this fist!"

A fist holding a dagger is also represented on the placards.

I have drawn the attention of the Voivodeship to this state of affairs.

von Küchler

No. 80 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, October 14, 1937

Numerous reports from the Consulate-General show clearly enough what kind of freedom the German minority here enjoys. Not only the

cases of expropriation, of withdrawal of concessions, of refusal to grant permits of residence, of closing of schools and the well-known law concerning the frontier-zone, but other measures as well, such as the rigorous collection of taxes etc. etc., make it quite clear that the Poles are adopting every device to destroy everything German here, or to compel the Germans to emigrate. Recently the agitation among the masses has been systematically increased, because the higher authorities openly tolerate such activity.

Particularly strong resolutions were passed at the meetings of the anti-German West Marches Society, where protest was lodged against the "unworthy Teutonic work", and the following demands were formulated:

1. The expulsion of about 6,000 persons living here who had exercised their option.
2. The suspension of the elementary schools and the reduction of their number to that of the Polish elementary schools in Germany.
3. Prohibition of the use of the German language in church services.
4. Boycott of the German co-operative societies and dissolution of German organizations of every kind.
5. The ruthless carrying-out of Agrarian Reform in the case of German estates and the transfer of the land split up into lots to the Polish population.
6. Withdrawal of concessions granted to Germans.
7. The confiscation and closing down of all German newspapers.

From the foregoing it is evident that the position of affairs is becoming more acute from day to day.

The trend of matters has made a deep impression upon the German minority which fears further excesses unless the authorities put a stop to this irresponsible mode of procedure. Taken as a whole, the mutual relations between Poles and Germans are now if anything worse than they were before the conclusion of the friendly Agreement.

von Küchler

No. 81 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with Polish Foreign Minister Beck

Memorandum

(Translation)

Berlin, January 20, 1937

I drew the attention of M. Beck to the expiration of the Geneva Agreement concerning Upper Silesia,* and emphasized the necessity of coming to a timely settlement of a series of technical questions in the economic sphere. M. Beck declared that Poland was also prepared to negotiate as soon as possible, and that M. Lipski had already been instructed presently to discuss the question of the railways with us. He further said that the experts were to meet as soon as possible in order to deal with the other questions which require a re-settlement.

The political question of protection for the minorities was only briefly mentioned. M. Beck was of the opinion that first of all one should deal with the practical problems. I declared myself in agreement.

Frhr. von Neurath

No. 82 The German Foreign Minister to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, February 22, 1937

The discussions with the Polish Government in regard to the approaching expiration of the Geneva Agreement have been limited to the technical provisions for economic matters contained in the Agreement.

* The essential parts of the German-Polish Agreement concerning Upper Silesia, signed on May 15, 1922, at Geneva, expired on July 15, 1937. The conclusion of the said Agreement had been imposed on the two States by decision of the Conference of Ambassadors on October 20, 1921, the purpose being, as is stated in the preamble to the Agreement, to assure the continuance of economic life in Upper Silesia as well as to guarantee protection for the minorities.

As in the opinion of the German Government both States had an interest in examining conjointly whether the expiration of the Agreement would not lead to the lapse of vital rights and economic structures in the future, the retention of which appeared to be necessary or advisable, the German Government endeavored to come to such an Agreement with Poland as would allow for the justified economic interests on both sides. Negotiations to this end were commenced immediately following the above-quoted conversation and were carried on by special delegations partly in Berlin and partly in Warsaw (cf. Nos. 82, 85, 86 and 92). However, owing to the negative attitude of the Polish Government, the result was comparatively insignificant. For although it was possible to come to an understanding on some technical and economic questions, the points chiefly affecting the life of the population, i. e., the questions concerning the right of residence for those who had exercised their option, and concerning protection of the rights acquired by natural or artificial persons previous to the transfer of sovereignty "justly acquired rights", remained unsettled. The Polish Government endeavored to be definitely liberated from obligations which they felt to be burdensome. The frontier which during the 15-year period of transition had been more or less obliterated by the introduction of special frontier passes, was almost entirely closed without consideration of human or economic relations. Thousands of Germans who had exercised their option were expelled from the country, and German property was beginning to be expropriated by measures of Agrarian Reform (cf. No. 167).

What has not been touched upon so far, however, is the well-known main issue, namely the problem of protection for the minorities, which is the kernel of the Geneva Agreement, and is of far-reaching political import.

The spirit and purpose of the Geneva Agreement according to its preamble, was to guarantee the economic life of Upper Silesia, and at the same time to guarantee the protection of the minorities; and for years the German Government have been carrying on an unreluctant fight for this protection.

These provisions will cease to be in force when the Agreement expires on July 14, 1937 and it is not clear how the German minority in East Upper Silesia, whose difficult position continues to cause the German Government great anxiety, can be protected in the future. It is true that in the Polish Constitution all citizens are expressly assured equal rights. However, seeing that even in the present state of affairs the minority has been discriminated against, notably by the Voivode Grazynski in Kattowitz, it is obvious that in the absence of special provisions for its protection it will be completely at the mercy of the arbitrary Polish authorities.

Even subsequent to July 14, 1937, Poland remains bound by the general provisions for the protection of minorities contained in Articles 64 to 72 of the Geneva Agreement, which are taken from the Treaty of June 28, 1919* between the Allied and Associated Powers and Poland; because the decision of the Council of Ambassadors of October 20, 1921, and Article 64 of the Geneva Agreement provide a time limit only for the Reich, but not for Poland.

As you know, we have considered the question of proposing to the Polish Government the conclusion of a minorities treaty between Germany and Poland. The draft and memorandum of such a treaty, mainly designed to set forth the aims of the negotiations, and upon occasion to serve as a guide for the German negotiators, have now been prepared.

I therefore request that you take the next opportunity to inquiry the Polish Government how they envisage the protection of the respective minorities in Upper Silesia upon the expiration of the Geneva Agreement, and whether eventually they would be prepared to enter into negotiations with the German Government in regard to the conclusion of a new agreement for the protection of these minorities.

I request that you be good enough to report the result to me without delay.

Frhr. von Neurath

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* Cf. No. 4.

No. 83 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, March 16, 1937

As Foreign Minister Beck will not be back here until after Easter I have had a conversation of more than an hour today with Count Szembek, concerning various questions arising from the Geneva Agreement. In the course of this conversation, I touched upon the problem of the minorities and asked him how the Polish Government conceived the protection of the respective minorities in Upper Silesia after the expiration of the Geneva Agreement, and whether they would eventually be prepared to enter into negotiations with the German Government concerning the conclusion of a new agreement for the protection of the minorities in Poland.

Count Szembek replied that, as far as he was informed, the Polish Government did not regard with favor the question of a bilateral treaty for the protection of the minorities. He said that it was not necessary to guarantee the minority rights of the German minority in Polish Upper Silesia by treaty, inasmuch as the Polish Constitution already afforded extensive protection. On the other hand, little benefit to the Polish minority in Upper Silesia could be expected from such a treaty, since this minority, quite unlike the German minority in Poland, was far too poorly organized to be able to profit from a bilateral treaty for minorities.

I explained to Count Szembek that, according to our previous experience, the protection afforded by the Constitution could unfortunately not be regarded as adequate, and showed him, by concrete examples, that our skepticism was well-founded. I further emphasized that the questions arising in connection with minorities directly prejudiced political relations and that, if the feeling in Germany had recently become more hostile toward Poland, it was undoubtedly due to this development. I stated that public opinion in Germany was growing even more aroused than was evident in the press, because the experience of the public again and again was that the German-Polish friendly agreement policy had brought about no change in matters of suppression, and that the Polish authorities were proceeding ruthlessly to decimate the German community in Poland. In these circumstances we were of the opinion that the conclusion of a new minority agreement would be both in the interest of the minority, and of great service politically.

In view of the evidence I had produced, Count Szembek admitted that, with regard to the treatment of the minority, the administrative authorities could not be completely exonerated, and finally expressed his readiness to lay the matter before the Council of Ministers in a form commensurate with its importance, and to obtain a decision on the matter.

I made clear that our proposal refers only to Upper Silesia, but at the same time personally requested him to ascertain the view of the Council of Ministers on the idea of a general minorities agreement.

von Moltke

No. 84 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, April 19, 1937

I had a detailed conversation with Foreign Minister Beck today concerning the question of the expiration of the Geneva Agreement. In the first place I pointed out that in the opinion of the German Government both States have an interest in examining the question together to ascertain whether the expiration of the Agreement would dissolve certain legal and economic institutions of vital importance, the maintenance of which appears necessary or advisable. After putting before him the questions which would have to be dealt with in the course of such an examination I drew his attention to the repeated conversations with Count Szembek, and stated that the German Government also hoped to come to an understanding with the Polish Government, on the question of the protection of the minorities, an understanding in the spirit of the Non-Aggression Pact and based upon the desire for the maintenance of good relations between our two countries.

M. Beck replied that, in his opinion as well as in that of the Cabinet, with regard to technical and economic questions, it would be necessary in this examination to ascertain whether any questions arising from the Geneva Agreement required a special settlement which would extend beyond the date of July 15. This examination would have to be completed as soon as possible, in order that no break might occur on July 15 which would give rise to bad feeling and dissatisfaction. As for the question of the minorities, he regretted that he was not in a position to fulfil our desire, for his Cabinet took the position that an obligation of an international character in questions of the minorities infringement on the sovereignty of the State, and might only too easily lead to interference in matters of internal policy. People in Poland were exceptionally sensitive on all questions affecting the sovereign rights of the State. As for the regulation of the minorities question in particular, Poland had suffered long enough under the one-sided burden and from the machinations of the League of Nations to be able to accept anything resembling a continuation of this state of affairs. When giving notice of termination of

the Minority Obligation in September 1934 * Poland took a serious step which she had very thoroughly considered beforehand, and, if difficulties had arisen on this occasion, Poland would rather have left the League of Nations than accept a continuation of the previous state of affairs; so great, then, was her objection to anything prejudicial to her sovereignty and to interference in internal matters. Nor did M. Beck believe that a bilateral minority agreement would influence favorably either the relations between the two countries or public opinion. Public opinion would at every opportunity demand intervention, and politically this would constitute rather a hindrance than a help. In any case, such an agreement would be intolerable to the Polish Government.

I replied that we too were very sensitive in all matters affecting sovereignty, and that we too had had unpleasant experiences in this regard in the past. At the same time, we could not consider a bilateral obligation on the question of minorities an intolerable curtailment of our sovereignty. As a matter of fact, all international treaties resulted more or less in certain disadvantages in regard to freedom of action. Apart from this, however, there was a great difference between a one-sided servitude under international control and the voluntary decision of two governments to come to an agreement concerning a question which was disturbing political relations between them. It could hardly be denied that such an obstacle now existed. The present situation was not favorable, and had during recent months become steadily worse, and the attitude of the Silesian Voivode did not give reason to expect any improvement. There was a sensitive reaction on the part of the public in Germany to news concerning the situation of their minority; that this was also the case on the part of the Poles was proved by the reports and articles on this matter which appeared every day, and which, as I had observed time and again, were for the most part inaccurate or exaggerated. If every obligation were to be eliminated in the future, mistrust would increase on both sides, and the agitation in the press, which was poisoning the atmosphere, would become still greater. It was therefore urgently desirable to lay down certain lines of future procedure for the treatment of the minorities on both sides. The pressure upon the Government—which M. Beck feared—to bring about intervention would occur whether obligations existed or not. But a settlement for the protection of minorities would be a valuable contribution to an understanding between our two nations.

M. Beck admitted that the present situation was unsatisfactory, and explained that he appreciated the full significance of the problem which had led to our proposals. He too was worried lest the minorities question proved prejudicial to the relations between Germany and Poland, and it was correct that this question was of great importance in regard to its effect upon public opinion and the promotion of good relations be-

* Cf. No. 49.

tween our two peoples; it was, however, a very delicate matter. He had no fears in regard to the general lines of the relations between Germany and Poland, but it was true that these smaller questions were not without danger. Although he concurred with me that practical solutions must be sought, he did not regard our proposal as satisfactory. Poland had considerable experience in the minorities question. He was, therefore, able to state that in Czechoslovakia, in spite of the bilateral treaty affecting minorities, the situation of the Polish minority was extraordinarily bad, whereas the example of Latvia, on the other hand, where there was no treaty, but where questions of minorities were dealt with in accordance with authoritative decisions by the State, showed that the situation of the minority was altogether satisfactory. Furthermore, the subordinate administrative authorities would be freer in all decisions affecting the minority, if the feeling that they were under the pressure of an international agreement were removed. The negative attitude, however, of the Polish Government in regard to an obligation in questions of protection of the minorities by no means precluded the subjection of the actual situation—he repeated with emphasis several times: "situation de fait"—to a joint examination. The whole question was at all events of a too delicate a nature to be left to the examination of a delegation of experts; only diplomatic channels could be used for this purpose. Either M. Lipski could discuss these matters with the German Government in Berlin or I with him; or perhaps, on passing through Berlin he could negotiate personally with Herr von Neurath. When I pointed out that the questions requiring discussion were in my opinion too complicated to be dealt with in this way, M. Beck expressed the view that there was no objection to employing an expert for individual questions. On principle, however, these delicate matters should, in the opinion of the Polish Government, be dealt with diplomatically only. In the opinion of the Polish Government better results would be achieved by this method than by any kind of formulated agreement. He regarded friendly understanding on individual questions as preferable to intervention on the basis of treaties.

By citing different practical examples I attempted to show that, if common lines of procedure were not agreed upon, no useful work could be done. M. Beck, however, maintained his point of view, referring to a Cabinet resolution to that effect, with which he personally completely concurred.

I have not gained the impression that the Poles intend to go deeply into an "examination of the situation", but I rather believe that this way out has been chosen merely in order to avoid the appearance of too abrupt a rejection of our proposal. Therefore, although I do not anticipate very much from following out M. Beck's suggestions, it seems to me to be nevertheless inadvisable to reject the idea out of hand.

von Moltke

No. 85 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, May 14, 1937

The negotiations concerning questions that arise from the expiration of the Geneva Agreement * are proceeding very slowly here.

In regard to questions connected with the further fate of the minority, the Poles evinced a negative attitude. This refers particularly to the continued validity of certain protective regulations in the Geneva Agreement, especially the so-called protection of acquired rights (Article 4 of the Geneva Agreement). In view of the dangers of the Polish agrarian legislation, we attach the greatest importance to this latter article.

M. Kunicki, who was conducting the negotiations for Poland, in regard to this question referred to an express instruction of the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, and declared himself not at the present in a position to promise any discussion of this matter.

von Lieres

No. 86 The German Delegation in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, May 28, 1937

All the present negotiations in Warsaw concerning questions connected with the expiration of the Geneva Agreement ** make it evident that the administrative agencies are distinctly under pressure from the Upper Silesian Voivode, and that therefore political considerations are very apt to enter into the framing of material decisions. This became evident both in the negotiations concerning the railway question and more particularly in a discussion with M. Kunicki. M. Kunicki is clearly an expert who is doing his best to settle the Upper Silesian questions impartially, and desires to make the friendliest possible settlement. Yet he told me quite unambiguously that in some cases the Polish Ministry could not make the decision which he himself might have regarded as the most desirable. Particularly in demanding that the forced emigration of those who have exercised their option be carried out, the Polish Foreign Ministry is apparently conforming to the desires of the Upper Silesian Insurgents,*** who are evidently clamoring for a sacrifice.

Mackeben

* Cf. No. 81, Note.
** Cf. No. 81, Note.
*** This refers to the Polish Insurgents of 1921 who later formed an association for the purpose of effecting the de-Germanizing of Upper Silesia by all possible means.

No. 87 The German Foreign Minister to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Order

Berlin, May 28, 1937

With reference to the verbal discussion of the minority question during your last visit to Berlin I request you to raise the matter again with M. Beck as soon as possible.

In case M. Beck, during this conversation should again not only reject treaty-agreements of one kind or another out of hand, but should also deny the continued validity of the international obligations for Poland, I wish you would immediately impress upon him that this important question must then become a point of open disagreement between the two Governments; you could only hope, for the future, that the actual fate of the German minority in Poland would develop in such a way that this fundamental disagreement need not prejudice the relations between Germany and Poland. For the rest you would naturally have to reserve the subsequent decision for the German Government.

I shall be particularly interested to receive your report concerning the course of your *démarche*.

Frhr. von Neurath

No. 88 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, June 1, 1937

I called on M. Beck to-day to make my *démarche* according to your instructions and handed him the attached Memorandum to which I added a detailed elucidation. M. Beck listened very attentively but showed no signs of agreement or disagreement with my remarks. When I pointed out in conclusion that my instructions from Herr von Neurath had been ordered by the Fuehrer and Chancellor, M. Beck appeared to be distinctly impressed, and repeated that the Fuehrer's desires were always certain to receive particularly serious consideration in Warsaw. Of course he would immediately submit the topic of my discourse to the Premier or to the Cabinet and therefore withheld the reaction of the Polish Government for the present.

For the rest M. Beck confined himself to a few short remarks; he commented on the fact that our sympathetic attitude toward the Polish action at Geneva in 1934 * had been received with great satisfaction in

* Cf. Nos. 51—53.

Warsaw at the time. M. Beck then added a few words of defence against my statements concerning the actual situation of the German minority in Poland, but did not go into details, saying that in the event of arbitrary action on the part of subordinate authorities, the Premier would certainly be prepared to intervene in his characteristically energetic manner. M. Beck tried to explain the difficulties connected with the whole German-Polish minority problem on grounds of the difference in the internal structure of the two States, for in his opinion the whole minority problem was extraordinarily complicated. M. Beck did not repeat his previous arguments against our proposal but on the other hand he did not utter a single word about the fundamental points of view, which I had put before him according to my instructions.

von Moltke

Appendix

Memorandum

Warsaw, June 1, 1937

1. The attitude of the Polish Government toward the German proposal for a bilateral treaty in regard to the minorities* has caused great surprise in high quarters in Berlin, and has led not only to disappointment but also to serious anxiety. From a political point of view, the German Government fully understand the objection of the Polish Government to unilateral obligations in the question of the minorities. Their attitude toward the Polish action at the meeting of the League of Nations in September 1934 gave proof of this. The German point of view in regard to this question was fully explained to the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs on November 19, 1934.** In the same spirit, the Government of the Reich had hoped that their proposal for a bilateral treaty placing both parties on a footing of absolute equality in regard to the minorities, would appear to be meeting the Polish Government half way, and might afford them a possibility of solving the problem in a manner which would make allowance for the Polish objection to unilateral obligations; at the same time it would free both parties from the necessity of discussing the fundamental questions arising from the past.

2. If Poland assumes that experience has shown the interests of the minorities to be better served by completely sovereign State administrations than by international agreements, and that in concrete cases a friendly understanding is more effective than intervention according to treaty, this assumption can only be judged as incorrect from the German point of view. The German desire for arriving at a clear interpretation

* Cf. No. 84.
** Cf. No. 53.

of legal fundamentals does not signify, of course, that we favor a policy of intervention or any policy of formal procedure. Germany also regards a friendly understanding about such individual questions as crop up from time to time as the only fruitful mode of procedure, and moreover as one which would harmonize with the general lines of German-Polish relations. Such an understanding would, however, not be rendered more difficult, but on the contrary, would be considerably facilitated by the conclusion of an agreement based upon the principles of complete reciprocity. If, in accordance with the Polish proposal, minority difficulties between Germany and Poland can never be regarded as anything but a "situation de fait," there is far more danger that representations and claims made by one side will be viewed by the other as unjustified interference with internal affairs, than if this is understood to be a matter for friendly discussion about an application of treaty provisions. Furthermore, if a clear interpretation of legal fundamentals is not arrived at, this would introduce a factor of uncertainty into the entire relations between Germany and Poland, which in the course of time would necessarily disturb and prejudice these relations.

3. Quite apart from these facts, the Polish Government will probably understand that the German Government cannot simply surrender, without a murmur, the position in which the well-known evolution of the German-Polish minorities problem has placed them. In the autumn of 1934, the German Government could afford to forego any objection to the action taken by Poland against the co-operation of the League of Nations in minorities questions, because, in the first place, they had long regarded such co-operation as valueless, and secondly, because for them one of the main points of the German-Polish Agreement of January 1934,* was to remove German-Polish problems from international dockets and make them matters of direct discussion. But of course our reason for adopting this view was that the Polish action was to be directed solely against the exercise of a control by the League of Nations and, moreover, that the actual obligations of Poland were to remain unaffected; a fact to which the above-mentioned conversation of November 19, 1934 also gave expression. Further, the approaching expiration of the Geneva Convention certainly does not alter the fact that the *general* minority obligations of Poland remain, in East Upper Silesia as well as for all other parts of Poland. As, however, the *special* provisions for the protection of minorities for East Upper Silesia are about to lapse, there is again urgent need for discussing the question as to whether it would not be in the interest of both parties to reach an understanding about the future application of these general provisions for protection, again not only for East Upper Silesia, but for all Poland.

4. The German Government, who find it impossible to relax their interest in the fate of people of German birth living in Polish territory,

* Cf. No. 37.

had and still have the hope that in giving active expression to their interest for these sections of the population, they not finally have to rely upon the concrete fact that Poland, as an integral part of the total settlement effected in 1919, has assumed unilateral obligations with regard to the minorities. It is for the very purpose of avoiding a misinterpretation of German political intentions, and of obviating any element of political bitterness in future discussions of minorities questions, that Germany has proposed bilateral agreements which would place her under obligations similar to Poland's. If the Polish Government should actually give a definite refusal to this proposal despite Germany's effort to meet Poland half-way, then there is only one way of arriving at a fundamental understanding for dealing with the minorities problem: conceivably, the two governments might make separate but simultaneous declarations to the same effect, concerning the protection of German and Polish minorities living in their respective territories. Although this way has many disadvantages when compared with the method of settlement by treaty, the German Government would yet agree to it as a last resource, because the situation would thereby be clarified at least to some extent.

5. Besides these general and theoretical considerations, there is the development of the actual situation of the German minority in Poland demands even more urgently that an understanding on the whole minorities problem be arrived at between the two Governments. This actual situation of the German minority the German Government, see, to their great regret, an incontrovertible argument against the Polish theory that the minority would fare best if the local authorities were left to deal with it at their own unrestricted discretion. As a matter of fact, our observations over a long period, particularly the last year, have left no doubt that a systematic attempt is being made, with the support of state departments, and of private organizations encouraged by the authorities, to shatter the economic foundations of the German minority in Poland and to cause all those who admit their Germanism to change their attitude in this respect.

6. It is not intended to enter into a discussion of details at this stage. But in order that the German complaint may not appear vague or unsubstantiated, we would draw attention to the following points:

(*a*) the disproportionate subjection of German estates to the process of expropriation on grounds of Agrarian Reform, such as occurred especially during the last year;

(*b*) the intensified polonization of German estates, which for generations have been in the possession of Germans, by application of the law of repurchase and priority purchase;

(*c*) the interpretation of the legislation applying to frontier zones,* which in fact is also directed particularly against the Germans;

(*d*) the fact that for some time members of the German minority have only in exceptional cases been given licenses, permissions to open shops, businesses, and commercial or industrial undertakings, and that doctors, druggists, and lawyers of German birth are meeting with the greatest difficulties from the authorities in the establishment of a practise;

(*e*) the equally obvious fact that German employees and workmen are dismissed owing to pressure from Polish organizations, and find no employment as long as they still belong to German organizations or send their children to German schools;

(*f*) the sad plight of those young people who have passed through schools licensed by the Polish State, but afterwards in preparing themselves for a profession have been caused such great difficulties that a disproportionately high percentage of these young people of German birth could not find a career so far;

(*g*) the boycott of all German businesses in the severed territories, which recently has even been publicly proclaimed.

In consideration of the extensive personal and family relationships of the frontier population it is natural that it has become known in Germany how more and more members the German minority are forfeiting their means of existence. As public feeling is mounting, the Government of the Reich are called upon to take reprisals and to limit the scope of existence for those belonging to the Polish minority in Germany, who hitherto have followed their occupations without let or hindrance. The Government of the Reich naturally hope that they will not have to resort to reprisals against Poland, but on the other hand, they close their eyes to the fact that the increasing pressure constantly brought upon the Germans in Poland is causing pain and disapproval within the Reich, and that the generous policy of coming to an understanding with Poland is distinctly losing its popularity as a result of these measures on the part of subordinate Polish authorities.

7. The Government of the Reich, therefore, urgently requests that the minorities question may be reconsidered, in the light of the above-listed points. They hope that the Polish Government will decide after all to enter into discussions of a fundamental agreement formulated in

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* In accordance with the order affecting frontier zones of December 23, 1927, and the orders issued for the purpose of its execution, limitations were introduced in regard to residence and the acquisition of landed property within a certain zone. To this zone belonged the whole of Pommerellen, also the whole of the Corridor district, almost the whole province of Posen, and the whole of Upper Silesia. In spite of these representations by Germany the Frontier Zone Order was made more rigorous on July 1, 1937. Cf. also No. 170.

one way or another, and that they will, moreover, adopt measures as soon as possible to curb the chauvinism prevailing in the western provinces of Poland; for this chauvinism involves the serious danger that the co-operation between the German and Polish Governments, which has had such an auspicious beginning, may be hampered in its further beneficial development.

No. 89 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, June 6, 1937

Foreign Minister Beck, who is on his way to Bucharest with the President today, requested me last evening to call on him and made the following statement:

He did not desire to leave Warsaw without answering our *démarche* in the question of the minorities. His Government, to whom he had rendered a detailed report on our view of the matter, were prepared to examine with us the question of a declaration concerning the protection of the minorities. The Government had decided to do so because they attached importance to meeting us half-way in regard to a *démarche* ordered by the Chancellor personally, and because they wished no doubt to arise as to the sincerity of their policy. As far as the facts of the case are concerned, the objections which had been previously brought forward still hold good today.

M. Beck will revert to the matter as soon as he returns from Bucharest; he would be glad if a formulation doing justice to both sides could be arrived at. For today he simply wished to inform us promptly of their general willingness to negotiate.

Upon my asking him, M. Beck declared that a bilateral treaty would be rejected as before, and that only a declaration in accordance with our new proposal could be considered. From his renewed, if somewhat milder, refusal of negotiations by experts, I conclude that for the present they are not thinking of a declaration involving anything of an essentially concrete nature. It will, therefore, be advisable to propose in the very first discussion the matter in accordance with our desires.

Moltke

No. 90 The German Foreign Minister to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, June 18, 1937

Request you to hand to Polish Foreign Minister at once German proposal for minorities declaration in accordance with conversation of June 5.* Use wording sent by air courier today. In course of discussion on declaration point out especially that application of Agrarian Reform Law and Frontier Zone Order** for purposes of de-Germanization would be, in opinion of German Government, incompatible with declaration.

Request you further to suggest holding of regular discussions on minorities questions between representatives of both countries.

Neurath

No. 91 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, June 24, 1937

As M. Beck was absent for several days, I was unable to hand him the wording of our minorities declaration until today. While reserving judgment until he should have examined it more closely, he expressed his concurrence with the introduction. With regard to the actual contents he pointed out the difficulties which could arise here in connection with Jewish minorities, but for the rest abstained from any judgment. He said that he would have the competent departments to speed up their examination and that he desired to avoid all unnecessary delay.

Moltke

No. 92 Memorandum by an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, June 24, 1937

The German Foreign Minister requested the Polish Ambassador to call on him today to discuss the present status of the official negotiations con-

* The wording constitutes a pre-draft of the declaration printed under No. 101
** Cf. No. 88, Note.

cerning the Geneva Agreement, for the present progress of these negotiations does not satisfy us.* He pointed out to M. Lipski that we disagree particularly with the ungenerous Polish proposals for the future settlement of frontier traffic. The suggestion that the settlement should terminate on Dec. 31, 1937 we must reject as wholly inadequate. We must rather demand that the new settlement should extend over a longer period; nor could we recognize the obstacles cited in this regard by the Poles.

The Foreign Minister also pointed out to the Polish Ambassador that we could not accept the rigorous attitude of Poland on the expulsion of those who had exercised their option. This action, by which thousands of Germans would again be driven from their homes, is most detrimental to German-Polish relations.**

von Lieres

No. 93 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, July 16, 1937

It has been announced semi-officially that the following four drafts of laws are to be submitted to the extraordinary Session of Parliament for final formulation:

1. A draft of a law concerning the extension of the regulations regarding the official language for judges, public prosecutors, and notaries in the jurisdiction of the District Court of Kattowitz.

2. A draft of a law for lifting the entail on the estates of the Prince of Pless, that is, a law annulling the prohibition to sell and divide the family estate of the Prince.

3. A draft of a law concerning the extension of the regulations for carrying out the Agrarian Reform to the Upper Silesian part of the Voivodeship of Silesia.

4. A draft of a law for the extension of the order of the President concerning the acceptance of lands in payment for certain financial obligations to Upper Silesia.

According to statements in the *Express Poranny*, which is inspired by the Government, the adoption of these laws would result in splitting up

* Cf. No. 81, Note.
** In the subsequent negotiations as well, we were unsuccessful in preventing the expulsion from East Upper Silesia of those who had exercised their option.

German landed property in Polish Upper Silesia into small plots. There can scarcely be any doubt that the chief purpose of these laws is to expropriate the extensive forest lands owned by the Prince of Pless. The lamentable result will be that a great number of minority Germans will once again be deprived of their means of existence. It bodes ill for the future that such legal measures—for 2, 3, and 4 seriously harm the German minorities—are taken only a day after July 15, the date of expiration of the Geneva Agreement. Still worse, these measures are taken while we are in the midst of negotiations with the Polish Government concerning a minorities declaration and the question of acquired rights, so important for Agrarian Reform.

von Moltke

No. 94 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, July 30, 1937

Foreign Minister Beck requested me to come to him today in order to continue the discussions on the Minorities Declaration. He began by expressing his regret that the matter had been so very much delayed, but he said the visit of the King of Roumania and the difficult negotiations on the Vavel conflict had left him no time to concern himself with the question of the Minorities Declaration. In the last few days, his time had been fully occupied with the sessions of the Sejm, on the laws connected with the expiration of the Geneva Convention. M. Beck did not miss this opportunity to draw attention to the fact that he had had great difficulty in getting the aforementioned laws passed over the vigorous resistance of the chauvinists. The laws on Agrarian Reform and the language to be used by the Courts aroused particularly violent opposition. He was pleased that he had succeeded in getting the German language accepted for Court proceedings for the minority, and in so shaping the Agrarian Reform that its carrying out would not proceed at a quicker speed in German than in the other provinces.

M. Beck thereupon handed me the draft for the Minorities Declaration with his alterations. We did not proceed to a further examination of the text, but agreed to have another discussion of it next week.

I then took this occasion to reply to the optimistic statements of the Minister regarding the new Polish laws. I told him that, far from satisfying us, these laws and everything else that took place here in connection with July 15,* had greatly disappointed us. I stated that this was

* The date of the expiration of the Geneva Agreement concerning Upper Silesia.

particularly true of the law on Agrarian Reform, for its hasty introduction must give rise to the impression that it was intended to create a *fait accompli* in a question which was really still open, in which we had already suggested the possibility of a decision by arbitration. Further the law for settling the Pless affair afforded no solution from our point of view; for even if it offered a temporary way out of the embarrassing situation, our view of this matter was well known, both as a result of its very long previous history, and as a result of the legal action at the Hague Court, which we had taken at the time, but had later withdrawn in the hope of strengthening the policy of friendly understanding. As for the language law, while I did not doubt the good intentions of the Minister, I must point out that the authorization of the German language for Courts of law constituted only a very slight advantage in the light of the express prohibition of the German language in all other dealings with the authorities. I stated, however, that the law on the organization of the Protestant Church* adopted by the Sejm was felt by us to be a particularly hard blow at the Germans in East Upper Silesia, since the passing of this law created a *fait accompli* in a question which we had, according to paragraph 4 of our draft of the declaration, made into one of the points for our program of discussion. The excessively quick passage of this law immediately after the expiration of the Geneva Convention, and without previous consultation of the church circles affected, has caused us all the more surprise; for, from various statements of people in high governmental circles, it was to be inferred that the expiration of the Convention would neither cause a revival of the struggle between Germans and Poles, nor aggravate the actual condition of the German minority in East Upper Silesia. I recalled to M. Beck that, in the course of the recent negotiations, he had himself pointed out to me that it was the hated Geneva Convention which, being felt to be prejudicial to the sovereignty of Poland, had been responsible more than anything else for the inability of the subordinate authorities in Upper Silesia to accommodate themselves to the minorities policy desired by the central government, and that all would be well as soon as these questions could be again dealt with independently, in accordance with the Polish Constitution. Consequently, the articles in the Polish Government Press, which had appeared in connection with the expiration of July 15 and had with one accord struck up a song of triumph over the success of the de-Germanization policy despite the Geneva Convention and international authorities, had made a very disappointing impression upon us. The lovely bouquet of anti-minority laws presented

* The law, which was passed without consultation of the German Church authorities, changed the constitution of the United Protestant Church in such a way that the Voivode, as representative of the Polish State, obtained decisive influence on the internal organization of the church and on the appointment of its functionaries. All this was done with no consideration for the previous fundamentals of the Church Law and the Polish State Constitution, in a form ostensibly temporary, but actually permanent. The right to elect clergymen was withdrawn from the parishes and was put in the hands of a "Provisional Church Council" controlled by the Voivode, who, by the way, was a Catholic.

to us immediately after July 15 had only further increased the feeling of serious anxiety about the further development of the Polish minorities policy.

In the further course of the conversation I drew M. Beck's full attention to the fact that quite otherwise than in Germany, the economic situation of the minority in Poland was becoming continually more of a catastrophe, because it was being systematically deprived of every means of existence in all spheres of life, whether in agriculture or industry, among artisans or professional men; the terrible statistics of unemployment within the minority being a clear proof of this fact. I urged M. Beck, who tried to dispute these facts, to inform himself on the state of affairs and to do something to abolish once and for all this anti-minority spirit which was clearly evinced by the Konitz law case,* and even more by the recent debates in the Sejm; for it was not compatible with the Declaration of January 26, 1934. I declared myself hopeful that the Minorities Declaration, which formed the subject of our discussions, would bring about a change in this policy, and I said I was instructed to point out that in the future the German Government would regard such measures as, e.g., the application of the Agrarian Reform Laws and of the Frontier Zone Order for purposes of de-Germanization, as no longer compatible with the Minorities Declaration.

M. Beck then proceeded to speak of different Upper Silesian laws which we regard as discriminatory. He observed that these laws would, however, sooner or later have had to be passed and he had deemed it best as being better not to delay their passage, because this was the only possible way to counter the demands of the chauvinists, which really went very much further. In future, when peace and quiet were re-established, he said, it would be easier to exercise pressure for a reasonable minorities policy. For the rest, he, too, had hopes that the intended Minorities Declaration would have a good effect, and saw in this Declaration an important act which could afford a good basis for a reasonable minorities policy. Of course this presupposed that both Governments would endeavor to translate the friendly spirit of their Declarations into action. For his part he would see that this was done in Poland, and he could say the same thing for the Premier and the other Departmental Ministers in question, with whom he had discussed the Declaration in detail.

von Moltke

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* The Konitz Law Case was concerned with the following incident:—Two elderly ladies who owned the estate of Kensau in the District of Tuchel, had engaged about 20 unemployed persons of German extraction, some of them under age, to fell the trees in their park and convert it into a kitchen garden. The Polish authorities were of the opinion that this was a masked Labor Service Camp of German pattern, and prosecuted the two owners of the estate as well as the unemployed. Prison and jail sentences amounting to a total of fifteen years and eleven months were inflicted.

Upon appeal the sentences were reduced to a total of twelve years and five months, and in most of the cases the accused were merely put on probation.

No. 95 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, August 26, 1937

In today's conversation on the minorities *communiqué* the Polish Foreign Minister accepted our formulation.

M. Beck emphasized afresh the political and practical significance of the Agreement, by means of which we hope to lessen the tension in regard to the minorities question. The Polish Government is willing "de faire un effort sérieux". He therefore considers it very important that publication should not take place until the Premier, who is also Minister for Home Affairs, shall have returned to this country, because this would make the announcement more impressive for the Polish public. He has already informed the Premier, who will presumably return tomorrow, and has obtained his general agreement, so that any desire for changes need no longer be expected from that quarter.

I informed M. Beck that we shared his view of the importance of the *communiqué*. In the further course of the conversation I pointed out afresh that a future application of the Frontier Zone Order or of Agrarian Reform for purposes of de-Germanizing would not be compatible with the Communiqué.

In regard to the date of publication, Wednesday of next week has been provisionally chosen.

Moltke

No. 96 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, August 28, 1937

On Monday, August 30, the Silesian Sejm will deal with the draft of the new law on private schools and private institutions for instruction and education as an urgency movement, and will very probably pass the law upon a third reading on the same day. This new draft has a profound significance for the entire private school education of the German minority in Upper Silesia.

It makes a strange impression that the new bill coming up in the Silesian Sejm, provides for changes in the State Law of March 11, 1932, which may and will have results very prejudicial to the cultural interests

of the German population in East Upper Silesia; this we may assume from our previous experiences. This bill fills the German population with new and grave anxieties for its fate.

Nöldeke

No. 97 The Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, September 1, 1937

Request you to inform Foreign Minister Beck, through his Chief of Cabinet, that German official experts are still engaged in the examination of the Upper Silesian law concerning private schools, law which bears on important matters dealt with in the Minorities Declaration. As examination not yet completed, I must postpone communication concerning date for publication of Minorities Declaration.

Bismarck

No. 98 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, September 7, 1937

I had a detailed conversation today with the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which I most emphatically pointed out that the Upper Silesian School Law is a complete contradiction of the wording and sense of the Minorities Declaration we have prepared. I have formulated our wishes according to your instructions.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs declares that he is in a position only to state the basic attitude of the Polish Government to the general question raised by the School Law. The law is, of course, not intended to aggravate the present condition of the minority; the fact that, despite the new law, the school year has opened on September 1 without any actual restriction, may be regarded as a proof of this intention. As a result of alarming reports in the German press he immediately drew the attention of the Premier to the situation, and the latter promptly issued such instructions to the local authorities as were necessary to reconcile the application of the law with the spirit of the Minorities Declaration. Also the Premier desires, just as he himself does, that the

minorities question, which is hampering our relations, be finally cleared up once and for all.

Under these conditions, I now saw fit to agree to the publication of the Minorities Declaration, in view of the departure of the Polish Foreign Minister to-morrow for Geneva, and in consideration of the assurances of the Minister, which after all have considerable value for the future. M. Beck attached importance to being present in Warsaw at the moment of publication. The fixing of a more exact date, therefore, had to be postponed for the present.

Moltke

No. 99 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, September 7, 1937

After my return to Warsaw today, I immediately had a somewhat lengthy conversation with M. Beck, and have informed you by telegram about the course of this conversation.* I have the impression that M. Beck was not previously informed about the School Law prepared by the Voivode, and that, moreover, as a result of the Premier's intervention, the necessary guarantee has been established for bringing the law into harmony with the spirit of the Minorities Declaration agreed upon. We appear to be dealing with an attempt at sabotage by the Voivode Grazynski who—as we were able to gather from various indications, and as very well-informed sources confirm—is doing all he can to prevent the successful conclusion of any kind of agreement in regard to protection for the minorities, because he is afraid of being disturbed in his policy of thorough de-Germanization.

von Moltke

No. 100 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, October 6, 1937

M. Beck, who received me today *in re* the Minorities Declaration, first of all reiterated the sincere desire of the Polish Government to

* Cf. No. 98.

make the *communiqué* a starting-point for an action which might not only clear the atmosphere but also bring about a factual improvement in the situation. This is also the reason why the minority leaders were received by the President, in hopes that a similar gesture would be made in Berlin.

Moltke

No. 101 Identical Declarations Made by the German and Polish Governments Concerning the Protection of their Respective Minorities, Published November 5, 1937

(Translation)

The German Government and the Polish Government have thought it advisable to enter upon friendly discussions regarding the situation of the German minority in Poland and of the Polish minority in Germany. They are both convinced that the treatment of these minorities is of great importance for the further development of friendly relations between Germany and Poland and that in each of the two countries the well-being of the minority can be all the better guaranteed if there is a certainty that the same principles are applied in the other country. The two Governments have been able to note to their satisfaction that each of the two States, within the limits of its sovereignty, considers that the following principles should be observed in the treatment of the said minorities:

1. The mutual respect for German and Polish national feeling in itself precludes any attempt to assimilate the minority by compulsion, to call in question membership in the minority concerned, or to prevent persons from confessing that they belong to the minority. More particularly no pressure shall be exercised on young persons belonging to the minority with the aim of alienating them from the minority to which they belong.

2. Members of the minority have the right to the free use of their spoken and written language in their personal and economic relations, as well as in the press and at public meetings.

   No disadvantages shall accrue to members of the minority from the use of their mother tongue and from the observation of their national customs either in public or private life.

3. Members of the minority are guaranteed the right to form associations, including those of a cultural and economic nature.

4. The minority may found and maintain schools in their mother tongue.

In ecclesiastical matters, members of the minority will be permitted to worship in their mother tongue and to carry out their own church organization. Confessions of faith and charitable activities as they exist at present will not be interfered with in any way.

5. Members of the minority shall not on account of their membership in the minority be handicapped or placed at a disadvantage in the choice or exercise of a profession or of any economic activity. In economic matters they shall enjoy the same rights as members of the national majority, especially in respect of the possession or acquisition of land.

The above principles shall in no way affect the duty of members of the minority to observe unrestricted loyalty towards the State to which they belong. Said principles have been laid down in the endeavor to guarantee to the minority equitable conditions of existence and a harmonious life side by side with the members of the ruling majority, all of which will contribute to the progressive consolidation of friendly relations between Germany and Poland.

No. 102 Statement Made by the Fuehrer when Receiving the Representatives of the Polish Minority, November 5, 1937

(Translation)

The identical Declarations made by Germany and Poland concerning the protection of their respective alien minorities, which will be published today by both States, are intended to improve and to cement the friendly relations between the two peoples. The actual carrying out of the principles contained in this Declaration can contribute essentially to the attainment of this purpose.

It is the endeavor of the German Government to render it possible for the Polish minority to live in peace and harmony with the people of the German State.

I declare that the determination of the Government of the Reich, to secure work and daily bread for every citizen of the Reich, applies also to members of the Polish community, and is being exercised in their behalf. At a time of great unemployment and great privations, to which members of German minorities in Europe are still frequently exposed, the Polish minority is enjoying a full share in the economic rise of the Reich to prosperity. Similar progress has also been made in the cultural activity of the Polish minority, as is proved by the many kinds of organized institutions which they possess, and by the recent establishment of another Polish secondary school in Germany. The Poles in Germany,

however, must continually bear in mind that the loyal fulfilment of their duties towards the State and obedience to law must reciprocate for the protection of their assured rights.

The protection of the German minority in Poland, above all in their right to work and to remain on their native soil, will also conduce to the security of the Polish minority in Germany.

The noble object of the pact which I previously concluded with the great Polish Chief of State, Marshal Josef Pilsudski, is approaching its realization, as a result of this joint German-Polish Declaration in regard to the minority question.*

No. 103 Statement Made by the President of the Polish Republic when Receiving the Representatives of the German Minority, November 5, 1937

(Translation)

Today, upon the publication of the Polish Government's Declaration concerning the treatment of the German minority in Poland, the Polish President received the Senators Hasbach and Wiesner and Herr Kohnert as representatives of the German minority.

The President expressed his satisfaction with the Declarations published in the two countries, which have been drawn up in accordance with the German-Polish Agreement of January 26, 1934; he gave his assurance that the German minority in Poland could further rely upon a friendly consideration for its interests on the part of the Polish Government, as long as its attitude remained loyal to the Polish State and its constitution.

No. 104 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with the Polish Ambassador

Memorandum

(Translation)

Berlin, November 5, 1937

I have today handed an aide-mémoire to the Polish Ambassador, which express a series of expectations concerning the future treatment of the German minorities in Poland, such as our reciprocal Declarations were especially designed to cover. The Ambassador received the list without making any observations in regard to it, and will forward it to his Government.

• **Frhr. von Neurath**

* On the occasion of this audience the Fuehrer proclaimed that he had ordered the release of a number of members of the Polish minority in Germany, who were under arrest because they had come into conflict with the German laws as a result of their political activity.

Appendix

Aide-Mémoire

(Translation)

Berlin, November 5, 1937

A propos of the publication of the German-Polish Minorities Declaration, the German Government express the expectation that measures will forthwith be taken to secure the German minority in Poland against every form of discrimination in favor of the Poles, particularly as regards the application of the Agrarian Reform Law and the Frontier Zone Order; also in economic matters, and with respect to their occupations, and especially in the engagement and dismissal of workmen of German birth.

In view of the measures adopted in the Silesian Voivodeship during the negotiations about the Minorities Declaration, the German Government are particularly concerned that the situation of the German minority shall not suffer any aggravation in the sphere of school and church life.

In order furthermore to attain the ends aimed at by the Minorities Declaration, the German Government consider it indispensable that proper influence should be brought to bear upon all organs that affect and form public opinion, and especially upon the press and the West Marches Society.

Moreover it is suggested that periodical discussions should regularly take place between representatives of the two states, concerning the questions dealt with in the Minorities Declaration.

The German Government finally request that penalties imposed in recent years on members of the German community in Poland for political offences, be generously re-considered for pardon or suspension of sentence.

VI. Poland's Failure to Comply with the German-Polish Minorities Declaration

(November, 1937 to November, 1938)

No. 105 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, November 22, 1937

Contrary to the assurances given by the Voivode Grazynski, upon the expiration of the Geneva Convention, that there was no intention of restricting the cultural development of the German population in East Upper Silesia, there continues to be a wave of oppression and dismissal against industrial employees and workmen of German birth. The distress of the Germans is increasing every month and becoming continually more acute, owing to new notices and dismissals. The result of the Voivode Grazynski ten years of office is that 75 per cent. of the Germans in East Upper Silesia, along with their families, have been deprived of their livelihood.

Furthemore, just within the last three years (1934-1937), that is to say, since the German-Polish friendly Agreement, 840 German employees have been dismissed from higher positions in heavy industry, and have for the most part been replaced by Poles.

The dismissals have been continued since the publication of the German-Polish Minorities Declaration of November 5,* despite the fact that, by point 5 of the Declaration, the German workman is expressly assured security of tenure, and despite the fact that the erection of a new blast furnace would indicate that business conditions are entirely satisfactory.

Nöldeke

No. 106 The German Consul at Cracow to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Cracow, November 22, 1937

On the 19th inst. at 8 o'clock in the evening, the Pan-Polish Youth at Cracow held a meeting in the Collegium Majus of the University here, which meeting opened with a speech by the anti-German Professor Dr.

* Cf. No. 101.

Folkierski. At the close of the meeting the excited students and other participants, to the number of some hundreds of persons, proceeded to the German Consulate, where they made a demonstration with cries of "Long live Polish Danzig!" "Down with the Germans!"

Schillinger

No. 107 Memorandum of the Director of the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, November 25, 1937

Today I received the Polish Chargé d'Affaires, Prince Lubomirski, and pointed out to him that, as far as the German minority in Poland was concerned, the state of unemployment in Upper Silesia was at the moment causing us the most serious anxiety, for even after the Minorities Declaration had been made, the dismissals of German workmen in Upper Silesia had not ceased, contrary to our hopes that new men would be engaged. We therefore considered it to be necessary, as a proof of the Polish Government's good will, that the Poles should do everything in order to put an end to these continued dismissals of German workmen, and on the other hand should open new positions. Prince Lubomirski stated that at the moment unemployment in Poland had increased, as it does during this season, in the industrial districts of East Upper Silesia. He promised, however, that he would submit this question to his Government in the form in which I had stated it.

Fürst von Bismarck

No. 108 The Director of the Political Department of the Foreign Office to the Polish Chargé d'Affaires

(Translation)

Berlin, December 7, 1937

Dear Prince Lubomirski,

Coming back to our recent conversation,* I would transmit to you by way of enclosure two reports from the *Kattowitzer Zeitung* of the 27th and 28th of last month, and of the 1st of the current month, which indicate that German workmen have lately continued to be dismissed in large numbers from Upper Silesian industrial works. On the other

* Cf. No. 107.

hand, it is evident from the first-mentioned report that the number of those employed in the Bismarck Foundry is continually increasing. I would again point out that the German Government is following the serious economic situation of German workmen in East Upper Silesia with the greatest anxiety, and I should be grateful to you if you would inform your Government accordingly, and request them to adopt measures as soon as possible, not only to stop the present development of these conditions but further to cause German workmen to be re-engaged.

Fürst von Bismarck

No. 109 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Warsaw, December 11, 1937

Report

In the course of a conversation today with M. Beck on political questions, I have, according to the instructions of the German Foreign Minister, raised the minorities question. First of all I referred to the efforts of the German Foreign Office to guarantee the actual carrying out of the minorities *communiqué* by bringing influence to bear on the administrative authorities, and stated that we regretted that the Polish Government had failed to do the same, which had already caused a certain feeling of disappointment. Various events which had recently occurred appeared to us even to be a direct contradiction of what had been formulated in the minorities *communiqué*.

I then touched upon the question of the German fishermen who had been expelled from the Peninsula of Hela.* M. Beck immediately interrupted me and stated that this was purely a military matter, which had nothing to do with the minorities problem. I replied that we thoroughly understood military requirements, but that we must raise the question as to whether it was necessary to carry out expulsions in the middle of winter and in a manner making it evident that no provision had been made either for the further accommodation or for any kind of care of these people. I requested M. Beck to take up this matter personally.

I drew attention also to the activity of the West Marches Society, which had been continued up to the last few days, and which was directed

* In the years 1937-38 about 160 families of German fishermen—a total of 600 individuals—who had long been settled there, were expelled from the Peninsula of Hela. As the Polish Government, in spite of repeated and urgent representations on the part of the German Embassy, had not been prepared to arrange for these families to be accommodated elsewhere. Said families were finally settled by the German Government on territory of the Reich; despite the fact that most of them were Polish subjects. The endeavors made to obtain, at least, compensation for the expropriated houses and grounds were likewise unsuccessful.

against German trade and German business men. This matter seemed to be unknown to M. Beck, and he observed that it was naturally not possible to guarantee the immediate application of the lines of procedure in the minorities *communiqué* to all the organizations concerned, more time was needed for this purpose. However, the Premier was determined to direct his efforts to this end and to issue instructions accordingly to the organizations concerned. As M. Beck had himself ascertained only today from a conversation with the Premier, the latter was at the time dealing with this very problem. The question of making a gesture in the spirit of the Minorities Declaration by granting certain amnesties was being examined—but one must still have a little patience.*

I laid particular stress upon the fact that there had not been the slightest change in Upper Silesia; clergymen were continuing to be removed from their posts and expelled from the land; and workmen were also being dismissed in a manner which was hardly compatible with the spirit of the minorities *communiqué*. M. Beck replied that, although the influence of the State in these matters was now less than it had been previously, he was more optimistic about the worker question than church questions; he saw no possibility of a satisfactory solution for the latter at present. He said that the situation was unfortunately being rendered exceptionally difficult by the intransigent attitude of the Protestant clergy. He had sent his chief of Cabinet, Count Lubienski, to Upper Silesia, in order to look into the question on the spot, and if necessary to exercise influence on the Voivode. If a reasonable amount of good will were shown by the Protestant clergy, it would be quite possible to reach a friendly settlement, for the law was drafted elastically enough to render this possible. However, the examination of the question in accordance with his orders showed that the unwise attitude of the clergy was making every kind of intervention impossible. The State simply could not tolerate the declaration of the clergy that they did not recognize a law which had been passed according to accepted forms.

I answered M. Beck that this unfortunate law confronted the clergy with decisions which they could not take upon their conscience. But since this law was only of a provisional character, and since—as he had previously told me himself—a fundamental general law was being prepared, surely it ought to be possible to suspend the execution of the provisional law until the final law were promulgated, and in the meantime to enter into negotiations with the Church. For the law had already become an impossible instrument, by reason of its vesting authority in a high official of the Catholic Church. M. Beck replied that such a settlement was not possible, because there would be too long a lapse of time until the promulgation of the final law, which must be passed by the Sejm. Furthermore, attempts had repeatedly been made to negotiate with the clergy; this I denied. M. Beck mentioned again today the

* Germany had already granted an amnesty for members of the Polish minority on the occasion of the publication of the Minorities Declaration. Cf. No. 102, note.

situation in Germany, where the opposition and resistance of the Protestant clergy was leading even to arrests, whereas in Poland up to the present the intervention of the public prosecutor had been avoided, although it might well have been resorted to. I rejected every kind of comparison with German conditions as being quite beside the point, and stated that it was a regrettable error to regard the Upper Silesian clergy as revolutionaries and enemies of the State. For they wanted only to discharge their duties without outside interference, and to be the peaceful spiritual advisers of the parishes entrusted to them. Certainly one ought not to expect the impossible of them.

As it was not possible to arrive at a practical conclusion in this conversation, I limited myself to declaring to M. Beck that we were convinced that he was in a position to bring about a satisfactory settlement and that we were confident that he would act accordingly.

von Moltke

No. 110 The Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, January 11, 1938

In the *Kattowitzer Zeitung* of December 31, 1937, there is an article entitled "1,100 German Workmen Dismissed" to which I should like to draw your attention. The article contains a survey of the dismissals of workmen and employees during the last year in the East Upper Silesian industry. I would request you to make use of the matter contained in the article, concerning the reliability of which there is no doubt, in your dealings with the Polish Foreign Ministry.

By Order

Schliep

No. 111 Memorandum of an Official in the Cultural Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, January 25, 1938

I requested M. Malhomme, Second Secretary to the Polish Embassy, to come to me today that I might speak with him about several different matters.

1. I raised first the question of the Eichendorff Secondary School at Königshütte to which, contrary to the expressly repeated assent of the Polish school authorities, the right of public rank has not been granted.

2. I stated further that, on the occasion of the verbal negotiations during the past summer, which had led to a gentlemen's agreement between Foreign Minister Beck and Ambassador von Moltke in regard to the secondary school in Marienwerder, the basis of negotiation to which the Poles had assented, had been that the Germans should open the Polish secondary school at Marienwerder, whereas the Poles should do the following in return: Regrant the right of public rank for the German secondary schools in Graudenz and Posen, and grant permission to complete the new building for the German secondary school in Bromberg and permission for the school to continue functioning on the present premises until the new building was completed. What Germany had assented to, to wit the opening of the Polish secondary school in Marienwerder, had been carried out several months ago, whereas the Poles up to now had done practically nothing. In spite of repeated representations at the Polish Embassy in Berlin and by the German Embassy in Warsaw, all that had been authorized so far was that the secondary school in Bromberg should continue to function on the old premises. The right of public rank in the cases of Posen and Graudenz had not yet been regranted, nor had the question of the new building been cleared up. It was incomprehensible to the German home authorities that the Polish Government did not abide by their definite promises.

von Fries

No. 112 Memorandum of an Official in the Cultural Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, February 8, 1938

M. Malhomme, Second Secretary to the Polish Embassy, telephoned me, in order to communicate the following, as a result of his conversation with Herr von Fries:*

It was a mistake on our part to assume that the right of public rank for Königshütte had been cancelled, for the right of public rank actually existed, but in consequence of the school reform in Poland it was necessary to fulfil a number of formalities before the right of public rank

* Cf. No. 111.

could actually become effective; this the Germans had, up to the present, failed to do. I replied to M. Malhomme that I did not understand his statements. It was a matter of indifference to me on what grounds the right of public rank had been cancelled in the case of the school at Königshütte. I must, at all events, emphasize the fact that this right could not at the moment be exercised, and that this was the reason for our complaint. As he now informed me that certain outstanding formalities must be complied with, and that then the right of public rank would be re-established I told him that I would make a note of this communication in order to refer it to the competent authorities. I must, however, explain to him that we had lately experienced so many disappoinments in connection with the communications of the Polish Embassy here regarding the readiness of the Polish authorities to meet us, that I could not regard the Königshütte question as settled until what M. Malhomme had told me had become fact.

Thereupon, M. Malhomme gave his assurance that he was doing all he could, but that the mentality prevailing in the frontier struggle had to be taken into consideration. I replied that my chief concern was that what had been promised should be carried out.

von Twardowski

No. 113 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, March 11, 1938

Senator Wiesner dealt during last Tuesday's session of the Senate with the question of unemployment among the Germans in Poland. He drew attention to the fact that during the fifteen years that Silesia had been under the protection of the Geneva Convention, German workmen and employees had consistently been dismissed, and that this procedure was continuing after the expiration of the Convention. Even the Minorities Declaration of November 5 had brought about no change in this state of affairs. The number of workers employed in the mines of Upper Silesia as a whole in the year 1937 had risen from 44,500 to 53,600. The number engaged in the iron industry and foundries increased from 23,400 to 26,600. At the same time hundreds of German workmen had been dismissed. Senator Wiesner was able to prove, by definite instances, that the dismissals had been continuing after the Minorities Declaration, although it was therein expressly laid down that everyone had a right to his employment, and that no one was to be penalized because of admitting his German origin.

Not only skilled and experienced workmen had been dismissed, but also fathers of families, having as many as ten children. Some of them had been called upon to remove their children from the German school under threat of losing their employment. Thus it emerges that the sole reason for dismissing these workmen was their admission of Germanism.

From 60 to 80 per cent of the German workmen are now unemployed.

In the case of the German white collar employees the situation is just as unfavorable. Not less than 1,248 members of the Trade Union of German Employees were dismissed in the years 1934-1937.

Finally Senator Wiesner drew attention to the fact that the situation of the German boys and girls who had left school was particularly hopeless, because they could not become apprenticed for the simple reason that they had attended German schools. About 14,000 to 16,000 German boys and girls between 15 and 18 years of age had received no systematic vocational training since leaving school.

Unfortunately, we must again recognize the fact that in the important sphere of the labor market too, the Minorities Declaration has not produced the results which the assurances of the Polish Government led us to expect.

von Moltke

No. 114 The Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, May 27, 1938

The Minorities Declaration of November 5 of last year has unfortunately led to no improvement in the sphere of education.

(1) Since the Minorities Declaration, the Poles have closed seven German schools, some of which are very large ones; namely, those in West Poland, Karmin, Dominowo, and Stralkowo; and those in Wolhynia, Luck, Jozefin, Cezaryn, and Dabrowa.

(2) During the negotiations for the Minorities Declaration, we agreed, at the behest of the Poles, to open the secondary school in Marienwerder. In return, the Poles had only to withdraw certain *ad hoc* restrictions, to wit:

a) Restitution of the right of public rank, which had been withdrawn from the secondary schools in Graudenz and Posen.

b) Permission for continuing the construction of the secondary school in Bromberg.

Although the Polish Embassy maintained as far back as Decem-

ber of last year that these conditions had been completely carried out, nothing has been done to date.
After many representations were made in Warsaw and in Berlin, the right of public rank for Graudenz has been secured, whereas for Posen it has not yet been fully granted. As for the new building in Bromberg, not even the completion of the roof was authorized before winter, with the result that the weather has done considerable damage. Although the permission to continue building has recently been obtained through the efforts of the Embassy, work has again been brought to a standstill by the chicanery of the Building Inspection Department. We have now been waiting almost a whole year for the Poles to fulfil their engagements, whereas we fulfilled ours at once.*

(3) An agreement is still in existence by which the erection of a new building for the German private school in Neutomischel was made dependent on the erection of a new Kindergarten building in Posenbrück. In this case also, only the Germans have fulfilled their obligation. The new German building has been standing unused since 1930. In spite of the Minorities Declaration, the Poles are inflicting severe punishments on the parents participating in the school strike in Neutomischel.

In conclusion I would add that, if the two arrangements concerned (No. 2 and 3) were carried into effect, this would facilitate further negotiations. The appointment of a mixed commission might also produce good results in this matter.

By Order

von Twardowski

No. 115 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, July 30, 1938

In accordance with my instructions, I visited Count Lubienski, Chief of Cabinet of the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs today, and asked him for an explanation of the recently issued prohibition of construction operations on the German school in Bromberg. Count Lubienski stated to me that Foreign Minister Beck, with whom he had spoken about the matter before M. Beck's departure yesterday, had empowered him to inform me that the Polish Government would abide by the gentlemen's agreement* between him and Ambassador von Moltke, although

* Cf. No. 111.

the Foreign Minister could not clearly remember that, in return for the sanctioning of the Polish secondary school in Marienwerder, the Poles had originally promised permission to continue building the school in Bromberg in addition to granting the right of public rank for the German schools in Posen and Graudenz. He (Lubienski) had in the meantime informed himself on the technical aspects of the matter, and hoped shortly to be able to cancel the prohibition just issued. After his return from Oslo, he will inform me further concerning the result of his actions.

von Wühlisch

No. 116 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, August 23, 1938

The anti-German demonstrations of the West Marches Society, reported by the Consul-General in Thorn, were the subject of a detailed discussion with M. Kunicki. I pointed out that these demonstrations had been of a pronounced anti-German character, which the demonstrations before the German Consulate-General proved only too clearly. I also brought into the discussion the recent smashing of the windows of the Consulate, and requested that care should be taken to avoid the recurrence of such incidents in the future.

In accordance with instructions, I drew attention to the fact that we regarded the economic boycott against the Germans, which was continually increasing in extent, as a serious handicap to German-Polish relations. Since the Polish West Marches Society was always at the bottom of all these actions, we must urgently request that immediate steps be taken against this organization. The present highly unsatisfactory situation could be neither to our interest nor to that of the Poles, and it was to be hoped that the Polish Government would finally decide to adopt energetic measures.

von Moltke

No. 117 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, September 2, 1938

The attitude toward Germany expressed by the Polish press and other organs of public opinion in Poland has lately become unmistakably

worse. This attitude has never been very satisfactory, and has always fallen short of the German expectations of the effects of the political Agreement* and the Press Pact of 1934.** It is true that newspapers inspired by the Foreign Ministry and other organs of political opinion were mostly correct in their behavior and often displayed a commendable attitude on many questions—particularly on those of foreign policy; but not even the so-called "camp of national unity", that is to say the party organization of the Government set up for the purpose of winning over the "masses" to the prevailing system, has avoided the use of anti-German catchwords to gain more popularity in its competition with the other political groups.

The Polish Government are maintaining considerable reserve in the face of these incidents; in any case there are no signs of any kind of energetic counter-action. It may be conceded that the Polish authorities' capacity to influence the press is limited, but such an extremely passive attitude can surely be explained only by the fact that the Government are afraid of employing such means of force as they actually possess for the protection of the unpopular German interests; they show far greater energy in representing their own interests. It seems hardly credible that the Government should be unable to prevent the repeated provocative demonstrations staged in the towns in the western districts by the West Marches Society, which is closely associated with the Government.

It cannot escape the notice of the Polish Government that this passive attitude is gradually creating an atmosphere which is becoming continually more incompatible with the German-Polish policy of friendly understanding. The tone toward Germany has, of course, never been cordial here; particularly in times of crisis, the Government deemed it valuable to keep its relations with Germany from appearing too intimate. However, that the song of hate, the "Rota", can be sung before a German Consul-General without anything being done to prevent it, is indeed an incident of a kind which has not been experienced since 1934. It is obvious that the Beck policy is at present even less popular than before. The Foreign Minister himself is forced to maintain great reserve. In the well-known case of the German secondary school at Bromberg, where the gentlemen's agreement with Beck had quite clearly been wrecked by the local administrative authorities,*** we have a clear indication of the tension which exists within the country. As a matter of fact, the members of the Polish Government themselves do not seem to be of one accord on Beck's German policy. In any case it can probably be assumed that neither the War Minister nor Marshal Smigly-Rydz are supporting Beck's policy heart and soul. In this connection it is also interesting to note that even an old pioneer of the policy of an understanding with Germany, like Mackiewicz, editor-in-chief of the Vilna *Slowo*, recently at-

* Cf. No. 37.
** Cf. No. 77, Note.
*** Cf. Nos. 11, 114 and 115.

tacked Beck's policy in an almost sensational article: He proferred the charge that Beck, by his policy of friendship with Germany, was neglecting relations with England and France, without having obtained corresponding advantages from the co-operation with Germany.

Yesterday I called M. Beck's earnest attention to the unfavorable development in Polish public opinion and to the recent, particularly violent anti-German demonstrations. A few days ago, I touched upon the same subject when talking with the acting Vice-minister, M. Arciszewski. M. Beck did not deny that the situation was unsatisfactory, and said that, immediately after his return from leave, he had on his own initiative drawn the attention of the Premier to these things, and that the latter had shown full appreciation of the gravity of the situation. When I observed that we could not understand why no stop was put to the repeated demonstrations of the West Marches Society, M. Beck replied that it was sometimes better to open a safety-valve than to impose restrictions. The Government had, therefore, confined their efforts to moderating the extreme aims of the demonstrators. In addition, M. Beck tried to minimize the significance of the attacks on Germany, and assured me that the Government were in no wise allowing themselves to be influenced by the nervousness of public opinion, but were keeping to the old line of policy.

Although M. Beck was very definite in this statement, one cannot hide from oneself the fact that there is an unfriendly feeling prevailing against us here, which might of course hamper the Polish Government in dealing with vital questions.

von Moltke

VII. German-Polish Exchange of Notes Regarding the Olsa Territory and the Polish Action Against the German Minority in that Territory

(October, 1938 to March, 1939)

No. 118 The Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, October 15, 1938

A compilation of reports concerning anti-German actions in the Olsa Territory has today been handed to the First Secretary at the Polish Embassy, M. Malhomme, with the remark that the statements here collected were not yet officially confirmed, but if they were even partially true to the facts, the situation in this district must, from the German point of view, be regarded as particularly unsatisfactory. At the same time M. Malhomme's attention was drawn to the very strong feeling which had been caused in German circles far beyond the frontier by the report of the Polish action. He was requested to notify his Government of the compilation so that they might take the necessary steps, and he promised that he would send off his report on the matter at once, by the courier who was leaving for Warsaw today.

I request that for your part you, too, will make very serious representations at the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and will report to us about the results.*

By Order

Fürst von Bismarck

No. 119 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, October 25, 1938

The notes concerning the treatment of the German minority in Teschen were exchanged between the 18th and 20th inst., and I have the honor of submitting the two notes herewith.

von Moltke

* In consequence of the discussions which were thereupon instituted in the Polish Foreign Ministry it was agreed to extend the application of the Minorities Declaration of November 5, 1931, (cf. No. 101) to the German minority in the Olsa Territory and the Polish minority in the Sudeten Territory respectively, by means of an exchange of Notes (cf. No. 119).

Appendices

The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Polish Foreign Minister

(Translation)

Warsaw, October 18, 1938

Your Excellency,

In connection with the incorporation of previous Czech territory in the Polish State, I have the honor, in accordance with my instructions, to draw the attention of Your Excellency to a circumstance to which the German Government, in conformity with public opinion in Germany, attach particular importance.

There are resident in the territories mentioned, a considerable number of people of German extraction who, particularly where they are dwelling together in large communities, maintain their own social and cultural institutions. The German Government anticipate that the friendly relations between Germany and Poland, which again successfully stood the test in the Czech crisis, will also prove effective in the dealings of the Polish State with those Germans who are now to become its members. The German Government, for that reason, expect that these Germans, after the period of oppression which they have suffered, will experience such treatment at the hands of the Polish authorities as is in accordance with the Minorities Declarations previously made by both parties,* and that accordingly, they will not only continue to enjoy their present cultural status but even that their conditions of existence within the Polish State will be happier than before.

Likewise the German Government expect that, as a matter of course, nationals of the Reich living in the districts mentioned will suffer no disadvantages as a result of the change in sovereign authority, and particularly that they will not be at any disadvantage in the exercise of their previous trades and callings.

I am instructed to say that the German Government will observe the same principles in its dealings with persons belonging to the Polish race or the Polish nation, and residing in the district which has now passed over from the Czech to the German state authorities.

In so far as members of Polish minorities, or Polish subjects in the territories now coming to Germany, or, vice versa, members of German minorities or German subjects in the territories now coming to Poland, may desire to leave the State territory, the German Government propose that questions arising in this connection presently be settled by a special arrangement.

I have the honor to be, etc., etc.

von Moltke

* Cf. No. 101.

The Polish Foreign Minister to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

(Translation)

Warsaw, October 20, 1938

Your Excellency,

I have the honor of acknowledging the receipt of Your Excellency's letter of October 18, 1938, in which Your Excellency draws attention to certain communities of persons of German descent, and dwell in the territory recently returned to Poland by Czechoslovakia. These persons are about to become Polish citizens.

I wish especially to express the conviction that the application of the German-Polish Minorities Declaration of November 5, 1937* to this minority will not only afford it the possibility of maintaining its previous cultural status, but will also procure for it happier conditions of existence than it has heretofore enjoyed; and that the same would hold for the Polish minority, similarly living in fairly large national groups, in the areas accruing to Germany by the recent territorial changes.

The Polish Government will also maintain a benevolent attitude with regard to German nationals resident in the above mentioned territory, on the condition of reciprocity and as long, of course, as the laws in force in the Polish State are observed.

Furthermore, the Polish Government are convinced that the problems of persons wishing to leave the territory in which they are now resident, can be settled favorably and without prejudice to either State in case such problems should actually arise.

Finally, I have the honor to express the conviction that the atmosphere of friendly relations prevailing between our two countries will be conducive to a settlement of the above questions.

I have the honor to be, etc., etc.

For the Minister

Szembek

No. 120 The German Minister for Home Affairs to the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, November 5, 1938

One of the repercussions of the de-Germanizing measures beginning with the occupation of the Teschen district by Polish troops, is an extraordinarily large influx of refugees. In the refugee camps under my control alone, over 5,000 persons have been counted to date. Apart from

* Cf. No. 101.

these, there are many more refugees who have passed over the German frontier without reporting at any camp. These also can probably be numbered by thousands. About thirty to forty percent of the German population of the Teschen District have probably already left their homes.* Despite the fact that the German authorities have closed the frontier, about a hundred and twenty refugees a day still come across, because they are threatened with starvation in the Olsa territory.

Only a small number of these fugitives will be able to return to their homes, as most of them receive their frontier pass from the Poles only upon renouncing in writing their right of return.

By Order

Vollert

No. 121 The Foreign Office to the German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, November 26, 1938

According to information received from the most various departments, the de-Germanization of the Olsa Territory by Polish measures continues without diminution in spite of our exchange of notes with the Polish Government concerning the protection of the minorities. The measures in question are particularly the following:

a. Throwing Germans out of Work

As a rule, German employees are told either by their employers or by the authorities that they may expect to be kept on only if they can bring evidence, within three months, of having mastered the Polish language. In some concerns, as for instance in the Trzyniec Iron Works, the workmen were only allowed entrance upon producing an identification card from a Polish organization, and provided that they were entered on a list of desirables. The employees are practically compelled by such conditions to give up their employment right now. In numerous cases it has happened that immediately after the occupation of a territory by the Polish troops, German workmen were put upon indefinite leave without further payment of wages and salaries, or even dismissed, while workmen of Polish origin were hired in their place. Within the last couple of days, workmen of German descent at the Freistädt Industrial Works have been given notice to quit their work at the next legal date. This affected particularly fathers of families who had not entered their

* This percentage increased very considerably according to a further communication of the German Minister for Home Affairs.

children in the Polish school. In Oderberg all workmen and employees of the Odra Oil Refining Works who were members of the German minority, received notice last week to leave on December 31 of the current year; the Hahn Tube and Rolling Works in Neu-Oderberg have also given notice to about fifty employees of German birth and over a hundred German workmen, for December 31, 1938.

In addition to workmen and lesser employees of private concerns there have also been numerous cases in which managing officials of German birth, such as engineers and directors, have been dismissed or put on indefinite leave without further payment of salary.

b. Suspension of Pension Payments

Since the change in the sovereignty of the State, all payment of maintenance or pensions hitherto paid to former workmen, employees or officials by their Czech employers, by associations, or by the State or the municipalities, have ceased. The families affected are now completely without means. As a result, these classes of German society, too, are placed in a hopeless economic situation.

c. Hampering of German Concerns by Sequestrators

The Polish sequestrators who were put into German concerns at the time of the occupation have so far not been withdrawn. The conduct of the concerns is made insupportably difficult by these sequestrations, even to their ultimate ruin.

d. Difficulties in Obtaining Return Visas to German Nationals in Business Positions

In the granting of return visas to nationals of the Reich who are engaged in business in the Olsa Territory, and who are often obliged to travel abroad on business, the competent authorities create such difficulties that these people find it very hard, if not actually impossible, to carry on their affairs.

e. Damage to German Schools

Whereas the Polish schools have been in full operation for weeks, every conceivable difficulty is put in the way of the re-opening of the German schools; for instance, numerous German parents of school children have received written summonses, to the effect that the governing body of the local Polish school summons them for the last time to enter their children in the Polish school within twenty-four hours after service of this summons, on pain of punishment or expulsion.

If the German parents enter their children in a German school despite these threats, great obstacles, such as examinations designed to cast doubts upon the children's belonging to the German population, are put in their way. The commissioner for German schools in Neu-Oderberg, for instance, proceeds in this way: he begins by addressing the newly-entered pupils in Polish. If they answer him in Polish, then

he either rejects their application from the very outset, or asks them to name well-known personalities in Polish history. If the child entered for the school shows that it knows anything about this, it is without further ado allotted to the Polish school. If, in spite of all these attempts, some entries are actually received, then negotiations with the parents, whose cases have not yet been settled, are suddenly postponed to the next day, in the expectation that children and parents on second thought will decide for the Polish school after all. The Polish director of the German secondary school in Neu-Oderberg has rejected numerous applications of minority Germans, about whose German origin there can be no doubt, on the sole ground that the children in question had Polish names. The entries of German children for the German school in Teschen were subjected to sabotage by the Polish schoolmaster Cachl, of Kattowitz, who called upon police officials to attend the negotiations with the German parents, and these officials beat the parents with truncheons if they insisted upon entering their children in the German school. In numerous cases the parents yielded to this brutal pressure. A further means of damaging the German schools consists in fixing the school fees considerably higher in the case of German schools than in the case of Polish ones.

The result of all these measures is a calamitous decline of the whole German school system. Whereas before the occupation of Teschen by the Poles the district had four well-organized elementary public schools, and one elementary private school, two public and one private intermediate school, one classical and one commercial secondary school, one business school, one State training college for men teachers and a private one for women teachers, there now exists only a single German elementary school which, moreover, has but a single class. Of the previous 680 to 700 scholars of the secondary school in Neu-Oderberg, a mere hundred and fifty have been entered again. The German intermediate school in Neu-Oderberg, which was attended by more than 400 scholars, is still completely closed.

It is said that only about a tenth of the German children who have heretofore attended German schools, have been re-entered in German schools.

Naturally this great decline in the number of scholars must lead to the dismissal of German teachers, most of whom have emigrated meanwhile.

I request that the aforementioned insupportable situation of the German community in the Teschen District may be urgently put before the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and that, in connection with the exchange of notes of October 18-20, 1938, an energetic demand be made upon the Polish Government finally to regulate the state of affairs in that region in conformity with the assurances which have been given.

By Order

Woermann

No. 122 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, December 6, 1938

According to instructions, I have made very serious and emphatic representations at the Polish Foreign Ministry in connection with the measures of de-Germanization in the Olsa District,* and at the same time I went thoroughly into the intolerable situation of the Germans and also handed in an *aide-mémoire* in which our complaints were brought forward.

The acting Chief of the West Department, M. Kunicki, with whom I had this conversation, stated that he was not acquainted with the details of the Polish measures in the Olsa Territory, but that he would immediately cause investigations to be made, and that he would give the matter his special attention. He agreed to give an answer as soon as possible.

von Wühlisch

No. 123 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, December 20, 1938

In reply to representations made by the Embassy regarding de-Germanization measures in the Olsa territory, the acting Chief of the West Department, M. Kunicki, gave a provisional answer today.

On this occasion he handed over a note which, however, deals with the merits of our case only in so far as it refers to the situation of the German nationals. As the basic attitude of the Polish Foreign Office is that complaints in regard to members of the minority must be brought directly to the notice of the Polish authorities by the minority organizations, and that the diplomatic channels are to be avoided, many of our complaints concerning members of the minority elicited only verbal replies.

As for removals from occupation, M. Kunicki declared that the Polish authorities had no definite figures before them with regard to the dismissal of workmen, that as a matter of fact dismissals had had to take place in consequence of the adjustment of economic life to Polish con-

* The German Ambassador also put this matter seriously up to the Polish Foreign Minister (Cf. No. 199).

ditions, that these dismissals, however, affected Polish workmen in the same measure as German ones.

The question of the payment of pensions had in the meantime been partly cleared up, and one could reckon with a complete settlement of this matter within a short period.

The sequestrators who had been put in charge of German concerns, had already been partly withdrawn; M. Kunicki requested that actual instances be stated in this connection.

In connection with the alleged damage to the German schools, M. Kunicki stated that meanwhile more than 1,000 children in the Olsa territory had been entered for attendance at the German schools, and he took this number from a report which dated back to the beginning of December. On the ground of the enrollments which had been made, the following German schools were now to be opened:

in Oderberg one secondary school, one intermediate, and one elementary school,

in Teschen one intermediate school, one elementary school and one girls' school.

Moreover, German classes were to be established at the Polish school in Pudlow. In Karwin and Freistadt the number of German children was too small, so that on the ground of the existing regulations German schools could not be opened in these places.

M. Kunicki stated in conclusion that the central authorities were of the opinion that the German-Polish Minorities Declaration should be applied without question to the Olsa territory, and claimed that the local authorities had received instructions accordingly. He must admit that immediately after the Poles had taken over the government of this district, measures had been adopted which would not have been possible, if the machinery of administration had been functioning normally. He felt confident, however, that in the near future conditions would run more smoothly in the Olsa territory as elsewhere.

von Moltke

No. 124 The German Consul at Teschen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Teschen, January 4, 1939

According to a confidential communication from Director Olszak an express instruction has already been issued by the Voivode for the dismissal of all non-Polish workmen and employees, irrespective of any detrimental consequences for the plant.

von der Damerau

No. 125 The Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, February 1, 1939

Contrary to the statements of the acting Chief of the West Department in the Polish Foreign Ministry,* de-Germanization measures in the Olsa territory have not ceased, but according to the available information every conceivable method is employed to oust the German minority there.

In particular, kindly observe the following details, which supplement our order of November 26, 1938:**

a. Throwing Germans out of work

The dismissal of minority Germans and also German nationals from their work has lately assumed alarming proportions. According to reports from the Consulate at Teschen, there have again been numerous dismissals of Germans at the end of the year from the Trzyniecer iron works of the colliery and foundry syndicate, and from the Graf Larisch-Mönnich concerns in Karwin and Petrowitz, which are under Polish management.

b. Suspension of Pension Payments

Apart from the question of the continuation of pensions previously paid by the Czechs (state, municipality, etc.) to officials, employees, schoolmasters, widows, etc., who belong to the German minority in the Olsa territory, a definite settlement must also be reached regarding further provision for wounded war veterans, relatives of fallen soldiers, and retired military men or their survivors, who belong to the German minority in the Czechoslovakian district which has become Polish. The care of these groups who belonged to the former Austro-Hungarian armed forces, indubitably devolves upon Poland as succession state, even if their members meanwhile have lost their nationality by reason of a unilateral Polish decision.

c. Damage to German Schools

The figures so far given by M. Kunicki are the best proof for the justification of our complaint. According to his statements, 1,000 pupils have so far been entered for 6 German schools in the Olsa territory, where previously there were 13 institutions attended by more than 3,000 German children.

With regard to the German schools in Freistadt and Karwin, which, according to the statement of M. Kunicki, have not been reopened because there were too few German children, we have reports according

* Cf. No. 123.
** Cf. No. 121.

to which many parents wanted to enter their children for attendance at school but the children were refused admission. At Karwin and Peterswald meetings of the German *Schulvereine*, for the purpose of founding new schools, were prohibited at the last moment.

It should also be mentioned in this connection that the German libraries in the Olsa territory have so far not been allowed to re-open.

d. Expulsions (Evacuations) from the Frontier-Zone

Not only were minority Germans in considerable numbers continually forced to leave the Olsa territory during the months of October, November and December, 1938, but according to the findings of the German authorities a further 250 German families were expelled from this district at the beginning of January. The reasons for these expulsions have not as yet been made known.

In consideration of this state of affairs I request that the most emphatic representations be made again at the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs against the systematic de-Germanization of the Olsa territory.

In case the Polish Government should still refuse to comply with our well-justified desire, that Germans in the Olsa territory be treated in the same way as the Poles, it would be necessary for us fundamentally to revise our attitude towards the Polish minority in Troppau Silesia. I rely upon you to indicate this to the Polish Government right away.

By Order

Woermann

No. 126 The German Consul at Teschen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Teschen, March 21, 1939

From almost all parts of the Olsa territory, we are continually hearing of new dismissals of minority Germans and former Czechs.

On March 19, 1939, the Polish Director Olszak came to see Count Larisch-Mönnich and demanded his signature to a lock-out declaration affecting a fairly large number of minority Germans and previous Czech employees of the Larisch concerns. Count Larisch refused to give his signature, whereupon Director Olszak declared that he would obtain a corresponding written decree from the Voivode Graszynski in order to compel the Count to sign. Olszak has to-day proceeded to Kattowitz. Fresh dismissals are also reported from Trzyniec.

The impression prevails that a large-scale mass action is under way against all remaining German and former Czech workers and employees, particularly those working for the wholesale concerns.

von der Damerau

No. 127 The German Consul at Teschen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Teschen, May 13, 1939

The pretension by the Poles that most of the non-Polish workmen and employees had voluntarily left their work even before and during the occupation is only partially correct. Some workers doubtless fled to Germany during the weeks of exceptional tension in the months of September and October, 1938, as a result of the Czech reign of terror. The number of these refugees cannot be ascertained at this late date, but it apparently amounts to only a small percentage of the emigrants. If some more workmen fled to Germany after the occupation by the Poles, they did so only because they no longer had any certainty of tenure, as a result of the Polish reign of terror, which was then beginning and quite eclipsed the previous reign of terror by the Czechs. It has been proved, however, that by far the greater part of the officials, employees, and workmen were thrown out of work and deprived of their daily bread by the Poles immediately after the occupation, without any reason, or any consideration for years of service, age, the services rendered, or future possibilities of employment.

von der Damerau

VIII. Increased Stringency of Polish Activities Against the German Community

(October, 1938 to March, 1939)

No. 128 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, October 5 , 1938

I have already reported that the Poles here continue to be anti-German, in spite of the fact that Germany by her action has enabled them to realize their claims against Czechia. As a result of the incorporation of the Olsa territory in Poland, a certain, arrogance has taken possession of many Polish people, who tend anyway to exaggerate comparatively small successes in extravagant fashion. In this case they feel themselves to be victors in a great decisive battle, which they have won without any outside help and altogether by their own energy. They are already dreaming in their megalomania of an almighty Poland which, after fulfilling her desires in Czechia, must also strive to get other more ambitious desires fulfilled or, if this is not possible, to fulfil them on her own.

From all parts of the district for which I am responsible, I am receiving news that the feeling against Germany, which had been very unfriendly even in the weeks preceding the Czech crisis, has not given way at all to a more conciliatory feeling towards Germany in consequence of the course of events. The press, too, is doing its part in the business. Not a voice here is raised in just appreciation of Germany. Everywhere, the story goes that Poland has acted quite on her own and achieved success without the least help from outside.

The violent agitation against Germany is aided and abetted by the press and the West Marches Society. In view of the severe pressure to which the German minority in Poland is subjected, for it finally sees no alternative but to emigrate to the Reich. These Germans maintain that, even if they themselves could endure the situation, their children would certainly have no chance of any start in life. The continual measures oppressive of the Polish administration as recently evinced in the expulsions from the frontier zone and in the closing of schools, etc., are sufficient evidence that it is impossible for the Germans to continue living here, and that they must leave the country if they are to survive. The prospects of waging a successful battle against the Polish authorities, without considerable active support from home, is so poor that the enormous emigration of earlier days and again of the past two years has

seriously weakened the German community here. After the recent great wave of emigration, the little group that remains will have to see how it is going to carry on. There is, however, no doubt about the fact that those who do not become the victims of de-Germanization will gradually have to perish.

Moreover, what attitude the governing and administrative authorities take, and presumably will continue to take toward Germany, may be clearly seen in the continual and unabating expulsions of our fellow-Germans from those frontier regions where they have been settled for generations. All this has been previously reported. There has been no reduction or mitigation of the de-Germanization measures, as one really might have expected, but their severity has rather increased. At all events, in spite of Germany's endeavors to establish friendly relations, the Poles have clearly the intention of systematically exploiting the improvement thus accomplished, in order to de-Germanize the western territory as much as possible.

The same intention of displacing the Germans and of depriving them of their rights is revealed in the Government's attitude toward the desire of the German community to put up their own candidates at the forthcoming elections for the Sejm. On this subject Senator Hassbach has recently had a conversation with the Premier. As a result of this conversation it appears that the Premier, "in view of the anti-German atmosphere in the country", considers the registration of Germans in the election lists impossible, and also intolerable from the point of view of the Government.

Under these circumstances, it is comprehensible that a feeling of sorrow and depression has overcome the whole German community here, who after the historic occurrences of the last few weeks felt justified in anticipating an improvement in the relationship between Germany and Poland and in looking forward to a better future.

von Küchler

No. 129 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, October 10, 1938

As the current reports about the Polish press in Posen indicate, the Polish population of this district, in so far as it is influenced by the national democratic press and the organizations behind it, is by no means well-disposed toward the Germans since the events of the last few weeks. There is no word of appreciation for the fact that Poland owes the

acquisition of the Olsa Territory solely to the fact that the Olsa question became acute as a result of the active intervention of the Führer on behalf of the Sudeten Germans; and it is astonishing to us that simultaneously demands are even being made for compensation against Germany in Danzig and the estuary of the Vistula.

Despite the successful issue of the crisis, the Polish authorities are not showing by their conduct how greatly indebted they are to Germany for their share, for the action against the German minority is being inexorably carried on. Besides the action against the Germans in Teschen, Pfarrer Kleindienst in Luck, and other clergymen in Upper Silesia, it is significant that four of the six German private secondary schools, among them the Schiller School in Posen, have been deprived of the right of public rank, for which they had fought so long. There is also no leniency to be observed in the carrying out of either the Agrarian Reform Law or the Frontier Zone Order. Indeed other signs indicate rather that a more severe course of action is to be adopted.

Walther

No. 130 The State Secretary of the Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, October 20, 1938

At the General Meeting of the Insurgents Union in Kattowitz on the 16th inst., the Honorary President, Grazynski, stated quite frankly that the German community in East Upper Silesia was everywhere being driven out in fulfilment of the aims of the Insurgents Union. In a resolution which was read and accepted in the presence of Grazynski, the Insurgents demanded among other things the incorporation of the Zips territory. It then continued: "We rejoice at the regained freedom of our brothers on the other side of the Olsa, and affirm in that connection that we have not forgotten our brothers in the Oppeln district of Silesia. We send them our fraternal greetings and encouragement, in order that in the future as in the past they may remain true to what Poland stands for, in the knowledge that they have behind them our national strength and help."

Request you to lodge immediate sharp protest with the competent department of the Polish Foreign Ministry against both the anti-German utterances of Grazynski, and the impertinent intervention of the Insurgents' Union in German internal matters, which Grazynski has countenanced.

Weizsäcker

No. 131 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, November 8, 1938

Between March 1 and the end of June another 61 members of the Trade-Union of German Workers were dismissed, and from July 1 to October 24 another 35 members of the Trade-Union. Those dismissed —all but three of whom were married—had in many cases been employed at the collieries and foundries for twenty years and longer. "Reorganization" was, in most cases, given as the reason for the dismissals. The dismissals at the Friedenshütte (Peace Foundry) were on account of "unfitness," and that in spite of the fact that all of these men had been employed as skilled workers at the foundry for not less than 15 and sometimes even over 30 years. Moreover, another 40 German workers were dismissed from the Dubensko Colliery at the beginning of June on account of "reorganization", and a further 15 at the end of June; they belong to other similar German organizations. The vacancies left by the discharged men, who had belonged to the regular personnel of the mine, were filled by Polish workers.

Nöldeke

No. 132 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, November 15, 1938

I have lodged a very sharp protest with Count Szembek, the Vice-minister, against the provocative utterances of Voivode Grazynski in his speech at the General Meeting of the Insurgents' Union on the 16th inst.* At the same time I raised strong objection to the wording of the Insurgents' Union's resolution, which amounts to an inadmissible interference in German internal affairs. Count Szembek, who found no excuse for the new proof of the anti-German conduct of the Kattowitz Voivode, stated that he would submit the matter to the Premier, and that he would exert his influence to prevent such utterances being made again by a leading Polish official.

von Moltke

* Cf. No. 130.

No. 133 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, November 23, 1938

In Volume 19, Nos. 1 and 2 of the *Deutsche Schulzeitung* (German School Journal) there is a list of works forbidden for use in German schools. It is noteworthy that apart from banning such German classics as "Goethe's Childhood," from Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* ("Poetry and Truth"), the *Nibelungenlied,* and the *Edda,* world-famed foreign books for the young, such as D. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and H. M. Stanley's *Through Darkest Africa,* have not been sanctioned. Nothing could more appropriately characterize the attitude of the high Polish school authorities toward the German schools.

von Küchler

No. 134 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, November 24, 1938

The continued dismissal of workmen in the course of last year makes it clear that the policy of the Polish authorities still aims at rooting out systematically all that is German in Upper Silesia, and at destroying the means of existence of the Germans here. As is repeatedly evident from Polish confidential sources, it is particularly the Voivode Grazynski who has the firm intention of reducing to a dwindling fraction everything that is German in Upper Silesia and in the newly acquired Olsa territory.

It is regrettable that even the German-Polish Minorities Declaration of November 5, 1937* has produced no change of policy. As I have repeatedly reported to you, further dismissals of German workmen have occurred again and again since that time. There is no doubt that the reasons given for these dismissals, such as reorganization, incapability, etc., are intended only as a disguise for the political reason. As a matter of fact, these workmen, who, in most cases, have held their positions for many years, are being dismissed only because they admit being German, belong to German organizations, or send their children to the German school.

* Cf. No. 101.

With regard to the great numbers of unemployed among the German community as shown by the figures, Senator Wiesner stated in the Senate on March 8 of this year that the Trade-Union of German Workers, which numbers approximately 12,000 members, shows a proportion of unemployment of 62 per cent., and that in other German organizations the unemployment is as high as 80 per cent. These figures are as of the beginning of the year, and have since changed for the worse. If one takes into consideration that unemployment in Upper Silesia amounts in general to only about 16 per cent., it becomes plain how bad the plight of the German workmen is, and how little practical application of the principles of the Minorities Declaration has been made here.

Nöldeke

No. 135 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, November 28, 1938

On the basis of the agreements concluded last year,* energetic representations have been made at the Foreign Ministry here on account of the refusal to grant the right of public rank to the girls' high schools in Posen and Graudenz. Count Lubienski, Chief of Cabinet of the Foreign Minister, did not even attempt to question the Polish obligations. On the contrary, he stated that he would bring the matter up for discussion before the Ministry of Education, and exercise pressure to have the Polish assurances actually carried out.

von Wühlisch

No. 136 The Foreign Office to the German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, December 7, 1938

From copies which you have of reports from the German Consulate-General in Kattowitz** it appears that the people who have been most severely hit by the dismissals of workmen and employees by East Upper Silesian industrial concerns during the past year, have been minority

* Cf. Nos. 111, 114, 115, and 117.
** Cf. Nos. 131 and 134.

Germans, and that the established Polish policy of systematically depriving these Germans of their employment, is being ruthlessly continued.

The expectation of the German Government has been emphatically expressed by the German Foreign Minister in a memorandum "to the effect that measures be soon adopted, in order to guarantee the German minority in Poland against every kind of unjust treatment . . . particularly in regard to the engaging and dismissing of workmen of German birth." This memorandum was handed to Ambassador Lipski on November 5, 1937,* upon the publication of the Minorities Declaration. Unfortunately the expectation has not been realized, although the reply of the Polish Foreign Minister, M. Beck, to the representations made orally on that occasion (cf. paragraph 4 of the report of December 11, 1937),** gave rise to the hope of a favorable issue.

Now that a whole year has elapsed without bringing any improvement, I request you to make emphatic representations to the Polish Government concerning these measures, which are in violent contradiction of the Minorities Declaration of November 5, 1937,*** and to report upon the results.

By Order

Woermann

No. 137 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, December 20, 1938

The extraordinarily difficult plight of the German community, and the chicanery practised by the Polish authorities, which deprives many members of the minority of their livelihood, have not changed in any way. It is really a fact that the many arrests which have lately been made on the charge of espionage, the fear of which clearly arises from a growing state of nervousness on the part of Polish authorities, are driving our German fellow-countrymen to a state of desperation. As every family which has any kind of connection with Germany or with German circles, must be prepared at any moment to find itself implicated in some kind of trouble, it is only natural that a general state of panic is spreading, which leads people to regard immediate emigration as the only possibility of saving themselves from the desperate situation.

I am convinced that the Polish League in Germany is not subjected to any restrictions by the German authorities, provided it keeps up its con-

* Cf. No. 104.
** Cf. No. 109.
*** Cf. No. 101.

nections with its mother country and that country's offices in Germany in a way which is legal and does not endanger the interests of the German state. It might, therefore, be pertinent to consider whether this disproportion in the respective treatments of minorities in this country and in Germany is not of such a kind that steps should be taken to make the Polish Government put an end to the activities of its officialdom, for they might almost be described as amounting to persecution of all that is German—particularly when one takes into consideration the expulsions from the frontier zone, the Agrarian Reform, the school difficulties, the refusal to allow transfer of inherited property in the frontier zone, etc., etc.,

I feel it to be my duty to draw attention most urgently to the seriousness of the situation here. The unscrupulous de-Germanization methods of the Poles must lead to the complete destruction and annihilation of Germanism here, if we do not succeed, at the last moment, by means of negotiations with the Polish Government, in ensuring the application of the legal and constitutional provisions as laid down in the Minorities Agreement.

von Küchler

No. 138 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, December 29, 1938

By a decree dated December 20, the *Starosta* of Graudenz has put an end to the activities of the Hostels Association (*Herbergsverein*). Further he has ordered the funds of this union to be provisionally attached, and appointed M. Josef Wlodek, the mayor (*Stadtpräsident*) of Graudenz, as trustee of these funds.

The mayor has taken over at once the property of the Hostels Association, which consists of the following properties:

(a) *Herberge zur Heimat,* hitherto dormitory of the Goethe School.

(b) The Casino, hitherto refectory of the Goethe School.

(c) *Marienheim,* hitherto the office of the *Deutsche Vereinigung* (German Association) in Graudenz.

(d) A house, situated in the market place.

This real estate represents a value of a quarter of a million Zloty.

I have lately had repeated occasion to report on such measures of persecution on the part of the Polish authorities; the action against the

Hostels Association must be understood in terms of this general wave of persecution.

The Hostels Association in Graudenz devotes itself exclusively to charity work. The Goethe School has been very hard hit by the seizure of the houses of the Union, for one of the houses seized was the dormitory of the Goethe School, which accommodated eighty needy scholars.

In this case also, the action of the Polish authorities was so rigorous and was accompanied by such harshness that I think we should not remain indifferent to it.

von Küchler

No. 139 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, December 30, 1938

On the 20th inst. the German private school in Neustadt held a Christmas celebration. According to the program, *Hans und Gretes Himmelsreise* ("Hans' and Grete's Journey to Heaven"), a fairy play, was to have been performed. It had to be struck off the program, however, because the competent Polish authorities refused their permission for the performance.

von Küchler

No. 140 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, January 2, 1939

The measures of the Polish authorities, such as the many arrests for espionage, the expulsions from the frontier zone, the Agrarian Reform, etc., which are gradually annihilating all that is German here, are accompanied by attacks by Polish associations, which not only are not prevented but are actually tolerated by the State. Such attacks are made on German business establishments by the notorious West Marches Society.

It has been pointed out in previous reports that the *Verband des jungen Polen* (Association of Young Poland), for instance, has placed pickets in front of all businesses of our German compatriots, in order to prevent prospective customers from entering the premises. The pickets,

who wore white and red arm bands, called out to the customers, "This is a German firm", or "Don't buy from the Germans". When a complaint was made to the local *Starosta,* it emerged that the *Starosta* did not feel himself in a position to intervene; in other words, he tolerated the boycott measures of the *Verband des jungen Polen.*

Since the Polish authorities have on no occasion intervened against this sort of action, and have not made a single effort, even for appearance's sake, to intervene for executing the Minorities Agreement of November 5, 1937, it is no wonder that the emigration movement is increasing afresh.

von Küchler

No. 141 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, January 5, 1939

The continued dismissals of German employees and workers from the Upper Silesian industrial concerns have again been brought to the notice of M. Kunicki, the Chief of the West Department* of the Polish Foreign Office. At the same time it was made plain, with reference to the note handed by the German Foreign Minister to the Polish Ambassador on the occasion of the publication of the Minorities Declaration, that the German expectations had unfortunately not been realized. On the contrary, the fact is that the number of dismissals has further increased, particularly during the last year, although the economic situation in East Upper Silesian industry has improved. Most dismissal cases involved fathers of families with a long service record, i. e. a class of individuals who would not normally have been dismissed even in business reorganizations. The ruthless proceedings against employees and workmen, who, despite pressure from the authorities, had up to now refused to entrust their children to Polish schools, has naturally aroused a feeling of bitterness among the Germans.

M. Kunicki, who made no effort to make the cases mentioned to him appear in any better light, contended that the alleged difficult situation of the Polish minority in Germany must be blamed for the aggravation of feeling.

In reply to this it was pointed out to M. Kunicki that his contentions must be absolutely rejected, and that the Polish minority in Germany has never had to worry about its daily bread. Hunger and unemployment were weapons which only the Upper Silesian Voivode used against the

* Cf. No. 136.

German minority. It was no wonder, then, that great embitterment and a feeling of desperation were spreading in the minority. Therefore it was in the interest of German-Polish relations that the Polish Foreign Ministry apply pressure to put a stop at last to the discrimination against the German minority in Polish Upper Silesia. M. Kunicki agreed to follow up the matter further.

von Wühlisch

No. 142 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, January 19, 1939

I have lately had repeated occasion to report that the Polish authorities are proceeding rigorously against everything German here. The uniformity of the activity leads one to the conclusion that instructions have been issued by a central authority. The most important incidents recently include action against private individuals, such as expulsions, refusals to extend residence permits, the seizure of the Hostels Association in Graudenz, and the search made at the head office and the local organizations of the *Deutsche Vereinigung*.

In view of this persecution of everything German, it is no wonder that a desperate feeling has overcome the German population, and that the situation of the Germans here is rightly regarded as more precarious than ever before. The situation of the Germans has become considerably worse, despite the often professed willingness to come to an understanding. This feeling on the part of the German community is naturally leading to a fresh increase in applications for emigration.

von Küchler

No. 143 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, January 26, 1939

Since the expiration of the Geneva Agreement, the action of the Polish authorities here against German schools is becoming more rigorous. The most serious manifestation of this trend is the one-sided language tests,

which are administered by the authorities with the result that numerous children are excluded from attending the German schools.

No less than 240 people entitled to education for their children have been penalized because they have not bowed to the decision of the language-test commission and sent their children to the Polish schools. In many cases those entitled to education had to work off the imposed fines, or go to jail in default of payment. The majority of the children have been a long time on school strike.

Nöldeke

No. 144 The Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, February 1, 1939

On the 29th of January last, a congress of the Silesian chapter of the West Marches Society was held in Kattowitz under the presidency of the Silesian Sejm Marshal, at which Germany and the German minority in Poland were again subject to violent attack. The resolution arrived at in the course of the proceedings and published by the *Polska Zachodnia* (No. 30 of the 30 of January, 1939) proves that the agitation against Germans by the West Marches Society is being continued with undiminished violence, even after the German Foreign Minister's visit to Warsaw,* and that it aims at frustrating the incipient improvement in the status of the minorites problem.

I request you to express to the Polish Foreign Office the displeasure of the Government of the Reich at the fact that no steps have been taken against the incessant anti-German campaign of the West Marches Society, and particularly against the above-mentioned meeting, although the attention of the Polish Government was drawn to the demonstration betimes.

By Order

Woermann

No. 145 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, February 3, 1939

On the occasion of the congress which the West Marches Society recently held here, the head of the society, M. Mieczslaw Zaleski from

* Cf. No. 202.

Warsaw, spoke on "German-Polish relations in connection with the present international situation". In the course of his speech M. Zaleski characterized the Polish policy briefly and candidly as follows:

The conformity of procedure on the part of Germany and Poland was not a consequence of conformity in actual political aims, but was only dictated by tactical reasons. It was in the problem of the national minorities that one could see the best reflection of the actual political tendencies. In contrast to the political agreements dictated by the present situation, the object of which was to gain conjunctional advantages, the policy in regard to national minorities was a far-seeing calculation and aimed at preparing the ground for a future conflict.

Nöldeke

No. 146 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, February 25, 1939

The anti-German demonstration before the Embassy building, reported today by the D. N. B., was the most violent demonstration which has taken place within the last eight years. Not to mention the smashing of a window, the "Rota" song of hate was sung for the first time in front of the Embassy, and for a quarter of an hour alternating choruses uttered cries of: "Down with Hitler," "Away with the German dogs," "Long live Polish Danzig," and "Down with the pro-German policy." The two policemen stationed in front of the Embassy did nothing but merely guard the entrance to the building. It was not until reinforcements of mounted police and three armored cars were called up, that it was possible to clear the streets.

This evening M. Beck has conveyed to me, by his Chief of Protocol, his regret and the apologies of the Polish Government; he particularly regretted that it had not been possible to put a speedy end to this demonstration owing to its spontaneous character. He said that the necessary measures had been taken, both politically and by the police, to prevent the repetition of such occurrences, and that the Premier had personally undertaken the supervision of the orders issued.

Moltke

No. 147 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, February 25, 1939

The renewed demonstration before the Embassy today proceeded in much the same fashion as yesterday's, the only difference being that this time heavy stones were thrown against the building, with the result that one window downstairs and two windows upstairs were broken. The police who had been considerably reinforced since yesterday (there were 40 policemen in the immediate neighborhood of the Embassy), remained quite inactive during the entire demonstration, which lasted 15 minutes. The departure of the crowd of 300 people appears to have been effected by means of negotiation. The demonstrators consisted mostly of students belonging to the Radical Party of the Right.

The Voivode here, who is in charge of the entire Warsaw police, offered the apologies of the Government on behalf of the Premier and the Foreign Minister. According to his statement, a police cordon had been broken through, so that the demonstrators succeeded in reaching the Embassy. The officer responsible has been immediately suspended. The Voivode seemed to know nothing of the failure of the police before the Embassy building until I made my complaint.

Moltke

No. 148 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Telegram

Translation)

Posen, February 25, 1939

Anti-German excesses on the part of Polish students occurred here yesterday. A procession of several hundred demonstrators was broken up by police shortly before reaching the Consulate-General. Yesterday and particularly last night the windows of at least eleven minority German buildings and businesses were smashed, and individual minority Germans were man-handled.

Kassler

No. 149 The German Consul at Cracow to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Cracow, February 25, 1939

The German University Students' Hostel in Cracow was the scene of a wild anti-German demonstration yesterday evening. About 200 to 300 people had collected in front of the aforementioned house, and a group of about 15 Polish students, armed with clubs and bludgeons, forced their way into the German Students' Hostel. They attacked the German men and women students present, and one student, from whom they drew blood, was so badly beaten that he had to be taken to hospital immediately. One of the intruders cut off the lighting system so that the rooms were suddenly plunged in darkness, whereupon a scandalous smashing of furniture ensued. Chairs, tables and piano, window-panes and clothes-racks were demolished by the senseless, furious vandalism of the Polish students. It was not until some time after the demonstrators had gone away that the police came and made a report.

Schillinger

No. 150 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Posen, February 28, 1939

After a preparatory campaign of agitation in the Polish press, there began serious anti-German demonstrations starting at Posen on Friday, the 24th inst., in which Polish students were joined by passers-by and young rowdies. The Germans in Posen suffered severely as a result. The students attacked German people and almost all the recognized German buildings, many of which were the object of repeated attacks. The disturbances are still going on.

Matuschka

No. 151 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, February 28, 1939

Of the anti-German demonstrations held by the Poles in connection with the Danzig students' conflict* the meeting of the Academic Legion,

* Cf. Nos. 195 and 196.

which was held last Sunday in the University of Warsaw, deserves particular mention. The meeting, which was originally to have been postponed, but was eventually sanctioned by the Premier on the intervention of the military authorities, was attended by General Gluchowski, Vice-Minister of War, General Sawicki, head of the department for military and physical training, and furthermore by a number of officers and university professors. Colonel Tomaszewski, whom the Minister of War had appointed chief of the Academic Legion, delivered a passionate address to the students, in which he appealed to their patriotic spirit and urged them to make sacrifices; he managed to weave in at various points political attacks, which were in part expressly directed against Germany, in part meant for Germany, and were interpreted in that spirit by his hearers. Poland, he declared, had no reason to return any territory, but on the contrary had more than one territorial demand to make (cries of: Polish Danzig! Polish East Prussia!). Danzig, continued Tomaszewski, was a festering sore on the body of Poland, which must be lanced.

After the students who spoke had made attacks upon Germany, some of which were even more unrestrained, it was decided, among other things, to institute a "No-Germans Day", that is to say, a day of boycott to be directed against all Germans and everything German.

The demonstration of the Academic Legion, an organization sponsored by the Ministry of War, and devoted to the military training of young men at the university, differed from the other anti-German street tumults and excesses held by students of the National Radical party in that it was held under the auspices of high military authorities and in the presence of the Vice-minister of War. The sympathies of certain military circles for the anti-German feeling of the students, which could be observed in the course of recent incidents, was again confirmed on this occasion. The attitude of the police resembles that of the military circles, a fact shown by their passive behavior on the occasion of the demonstrations in front of the Embassy on Friday and Saturday of last week.*

I have made a very emphatic complaint to the Foreign Ministry in regard to the unheard-of failure of the police. Since Saturday evening the guarding of the Embassy has been more effective. A renewed attempt on the part of the student demonstrators to reach the Embassy building today was energetically prevented by the police.

M. Beck, on the occasion of our meeting at the dinner for Count Ciano at the Italian Embassy, added his apologies to those which had been made on Friday and Saturday by the Chief of Protocol and the Voivode of Warsaw. Different publications in today's press call for order and discipline, and to try to calm the public. However, it cannot be said that the elements who caused and organized the anti-German demonstrations have actually been quieted yet.

von Moltke

* Cf. Nos. 146 and 147.

No. 152 Conversation Between the German Foreign Minister and the Polish Ambassador

Memorandum

(Translation)

Berlin, February 28, 1939

I received the Polish Ambassador today and told him that I regarded with ever increasing concern the development in Poland arising out of the local student incidents in Danzig.* I drew attention to the demonstrations which had twice taken place before the Embassy while the police apparently had looked on without taking action,** and further to the agitation carried on by a large portion of the Polish press; also, that the demonstrations were still continuing throughout Poland. I pointed out to the Ambassador that I had so far kept the whole matter entirely out of the German press. However, if this press agitation and the demonstrations in Poland were further continued, the German press would reply, and surely he must know the German press well enough to realize that it would do so thoroughly. He, Lipski, knew the fundamental attitude of the Fuehrer, who desired to arrive at a far-reaching and definite arrangement with Poland, and knew that this attitude remained unchanged. By such regrettable incidents, however, this arrangement would certainly be rendered very difficult, or at least would be considerably delayed.

von Ribbentrop

No. 153 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Posen, March 1, 1939

This morning at 6 o'clock the glass pane of the entrance-door to the Consulate-General was smashed. I have informed the Voivode and requested him to take the necessary measures. Last night panes were again smashed in the windows of shops belonging to minority Germans. Owing to the continued provocative behavior of students, there is danger of clashes with German nationals and minority Germans. I request you to use influence to put an end to this insupportable state of affairs.

Matuschka

* Cf. in this regard Nos. 195 and 196.
** Cf. Nos. 146 and 147.

No. 154 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, March 4, 1939

Last week has brought no relief in the tension. Further demonstrations or measures against the German minority are being reported to me from many parts of the district for which I am responsible.

In certain towns the boycott against Germans is being extended to such Polish businesses as use the German language in serving their customers. In this connection is to be observed that the boycott against German shop-owners, which has been carried on by the West Marches Society ever since the separation of the territory, has led to the closing of many such businesses and the emigration of their proprietors. But this success is not yet sufficient; even the Polish tradesman, who serves his present German customers in German, must be given to understand that he is not to serve Germans at all.

Only a few days ago it was decided at a discussion among officers of the services to avoid those tradesmen in whose shops customers were still served in the German language. In other words, it is intended, contrary to all agreements, to make the life of the German quite impossible and to drive him away.

The boycott action against German tradesmen led, moreover, to a somewhat serious riot in Bromberg last week. During the night of Tuesday, February 28, to Wednesday, March 1, 1939, placards were posted throughout the town, on houses, shop windows, kiosks and fences, calling upon the people to boycott German tradesmen.

von Küchler

No. 155 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, March 9, 1939

In the conversation which I had yesterday with M. Beck, I reverted to the demonstrations before the German Embassy, drawing particular attention to the evident sympathy of the police with the demonstrators, and to the fact that, a Polish officer of rank, speaking to a trustworthy informant of ours, described the demonstrations as altogether justified. I declared to M. Beck that the establishment of these two facts, as well as other observations of a similar kind, had shown me, to my

regret, how narrow was the foundation on which the policy of conciliation rested here in Poland. Apart from himself, and about half a dozen other persons, there was practically no one in Poland who was taking any interest in this matter. One could not, then, be surprised if the feeling towards Germany were getting continually worse, for the Polish press did not cease to carry on its agitation. Unfriendly articles were published every day, not only in the press of the opposition, but also in the provincial organs of the Government; only the two official newspapers in Warsaw maintained a reasonably proper attitude. What was still worse, however, was the agitation of the West Marches Society, which was stirring up the population against everything German in a very obvious way by various kinds of systematic actions. But what was absolutely shocking was the wave of demonstrations* which had swept the whole land for three weeks last August, as a protest against the pretended brutality of the Germans, à propos of the regrettable accident to a Polish railway-man who had fallen out of the train between Danzig and Gdynia, and had both his legs cut off by the train. This agitation had been tolerated at the time by the Government, although it was known to them that the accident, for which the Germans were blamed, was solely the fault of the Polish railway-man himself, and that no German had been concerned in the matter. This was the most incredible instance of provocative agitation which I had ever experienced.

M. Beck appeared to be considerably affected by these statements, and declared again how very warmly he had expressed his regrets for these incidents to the German Embassy. He admitted that the police had defaulted and declared that the guilty police officer would be put on trial. Apart from this, he was of the opinion that one should not take a too pessimistic view of things. The policy of coming to an understanding was indeed not always easy to carry out, and he was by no means blind to the difficulties. He had, for instance, had a great struggle in the year 1936 to win recognition for this policy, which had been inaugurated by Pilsudski; since then, however, he had found increasing understanding for it in political circles. He felt that the main reason for the increase of ill-feeling during the last months lay in the Carpatho-Ukrainian problem, because people were blaming Germany for the failure in negotiating a Polish-Hungarian common frontier.

I drew attention to the fact that all grounds for such a pretence had been invalidated by the very clear declarations made at Berchtesgaden,** and that it was really time to do something against the poisoning of the atmosphere. At all events we were unable to understand why the agitation in the press was tolerated by the Government, and why the West Marches Society was being given a free hand in its anti-German actions.

von Moltke

* Cf. No. 193.
** Cf. No. 200.

IX. Continued Expropriation of German Landed Property in Disregard of the Minorities Declaration

(February, 1938 to February, 1939)

No. 156 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, February 16, 1938

As far as can be ascertained from data available up to now, the List of Names for Agrarian Reform* shows that this year 22,800 hectares of German-owned land will be expropriated, as compared with 21,100 hectares in the previous year. Expropriations of Polish-owned land this year are, it is true, higher than last year's, namely 13,500 hectares as against 6,100 hectares, which reduces the percentage of the German share from about 75% last year to about 64% this year; yet, this percentage is still considerably greater than that of the German share in the total area subject to Agrarian Reform, which is only about 30%. The regrettable fact is, therefore, that the Minorities Declaration, which assures equality in the treatment of landowners, has had no effect on the execution of Agrarian Reform, although the close connection between the two was explicitly pointed out by us at the time.**

Moltke

No. 157 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, February 22, 1938

After an undue proportion of German landed property as compared to Polish had come under the Agrarian Reform last year, prominent German circles entertained hopes that their estates would be dealt with more leniently this year. These hopes seemed justified, the more so as it was believed that the Minorities Declaration made on November 5, 1937, would ultimately bear fruit. The Lists of Names just published, however, have destroyed all these hopes. The petition of Senator Hasbach addressed to the Polish Premier shows that, of the total area selected for compulstory parcelling in the voivodeship of Pommerellen and Posen,

* The List of Names for compulsory parcelling out of estates was published annually on February 15. Cf. No. 42 as to the 1934 list, No. 55 as to the 1935 list, No. 64 as to the 1936 list and No. 74 as to the 1937 list.
** Cf. Nos. 94, 95 and 104.

22,254 hectares are German and
13,945 " " Polish.

The areas which have come under compulsory parcelling since the institution of the Agrarian Reform are, in all, as follows:

From German owners.....109,912 ha. = 66%
" Polish " ..... 55,714 ha. = 34%

In 1925, when the Agrarian Reform Law came into force, the total area of land subject to compulsory parcelling was owned as follows:

By Poles ..... 729,750 ha.
By Germans ..... 513,770 ha.

Of this total area the following figures show "the availabe land":*

In Polish hands..... 411,810 ha.
In German " ..... 261,260 ha.

Expressed in percentages, these areas stand in the ratio of 62:38.

If Agrarian Reform had been applied equitably, the land privately owned by Germans and Poles would have been brought under compulsory parcelling only in that ratio. However, whereas only 55,714 hectares were requisitioned from Poles on the List of Names, 109,912 hectares were requisitioned from the Germans. These figures stand in an exactly inverse ratio to the areas owned. Of Polish landed property only 39% has been requisitioned for compulsory parcelling, instead of 62%, while of German landed property 61% has been requisitioned instead of 38%. Senator Hasbach pointed out another serious anxiety of the German minority. Although German landed property has been subjected to the Agrarian Reform in an unjustifiably large measure, and the living-space of the German minority has been enormously restricted thereby, the German minority has benefited hardly at all from the new-formed peasant holdings. According to available figures, not even 1% of the area brought under Agrarian Reform has been allotted to the German minority, for the land commissioners of the voivodeships of Posen and Pommerellen practically made a principle of refusing them allotments.

The facts cited by Senator Hasbach make it comprehensible why consternation and hopelessness prevail in the German minority. Making no effort at concealment, the Poles demonstrate by their procedure that the minority agreements have no validity for them, but that, despite all their promises and assurances, they operate on the inexorable principle of destroying the German element. If one adds to this Agrarian Reform the chicanery of the Frontier Zones Law and the refusals to grant permits to stay in the country, one will understand why the Germans must give up all hope of making their position bearable.

Walther

* Total areas subject to compulsory parcelling according to the Agrarian Reform Law, i. e., after deducting portions of estates left to their owners, and waters, all of which are exempt from parcelling.

No. 158 The State Secretary at the Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, February 22, 1938

List of Names of February 15 has caused great astonishment here as German landed property in the voivodeships of Posen and Pommerellen is again being subjected to compulsory parcelling in relatively much larger measure than Polish.

I therefore request you to express to the Foreign Minister our great astonishment at these new measures not in accord with German-Polish Minorities Declaration. German Government amazed at violation of Minorities Declaration, particularly because, in course of your conversation with Polish Foreign Minister respecting formulation and significance of this declaration you repeatedly pointed out explicitly and without being contradicted that future application of Agrarian Reform for purposes of de-Germanization was incompatible with the Declaration.*

Mackensen

No. 159 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, February 25, 1938

According to the last List of Names published, many German estates have again been expropriated and German landowners discriminated against by being subjected to Agrarian Reform in a measure relatively larger than the Poles. This is regarded here as a great calamity. The feeling among the Germans is, in consequence, one of hopelessness and despair. They do not know where to turn, and see no glimmer of hope anywhere. The compensation which is being paid merely veils the confiscation. Estates which have good or fairly good soil, the average value of which per *morgen* is 250 zloty, are expropriated at an average price of 60 zloty per *morgen,* that is, roughly 25% of their real value, and even this compensation is not paid in cash, but largely in State bonds, the value of which on the Stock Exchange is only 50%.

Under these circumstances it is only too comprehensible that the Germans who expected a better future as a result of the Minorities Agreement, and who are now so inconceivably hard hit, should look around

* Cf. Nos. 94, 95.

for help in dumb despair. They are disappointed that the German press takes no notice of their suffering, and does not put itself in their place. A just and unvarnished account of what has happened can be found in none of the newspapers. Their fate is all too inadequately touched upon; the monstrosity of the breach of the Agreement is minimized. The Germans look to nothing but ruin in the future, and feel that they are being absolutely forsaken.

von Küchler

No. 160 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, March 8, 1938

As already reported, it was impossible for me to carry out your telegraphic instructions with regard to a *démarche** in the matter of the Agrarian Reform prior to the evening of the 4th inst., i. e., just before Foreign Minister Beck left for Rome. In accordance with my instructions, I employed the figures contained in the report of the Consul-General of Posen, of February 22,** which, in my opinion, irrefutably demonstrates discrimination against the German minority. I further pointed out that German peasants are being systematically excluded from new settlements, and are being prevented from extending their holdings as well; and that the method of applying the Frontier Zone Law, i. e., the almost invariable refusal of the permission requisite in cases of land transfer—even in the case of land inherited by the son from the father—has made of this law a veritable measure of de-Germanization. In continuation of a previous conversation, I presented M. Beck with material relating to the unemployment in Upper Silesia, in order to prove that, on every hand and in every way, the German element was being subjected to economic discrimination.

M. Beck denied that an unfriendly attitude toward the German minority existed in any sphere, and again referred in this regard to the instructions which had been given by the Premier. In answer to the figures submitted by me concerning Agrarian Reform, M. Beck said that, in the first place, the aim of Agrarian Reform was to reduce all the large agricultural estates in Poland to the size laid down in the Law. This aim would henceforth be pursued with greater speed than hitherto, so that in all probability it would be completely realized in a very few years. Therefore the question of the order in which the expropriations were to take place no longer played a very important part, since all landowners,

* Cf. No. 158.
** Cf. No. 157.

whether Poles or Germans, would come under Agrarian Reform before long. Secondly, M. Beck pointed to the fact that the Polish landlords had carried out a comparatively large voluntary parcelling out of their estates, whereas the Germans had done hardly any. Finally M. Beck made the point that the large estates were 30% German, while the relative German population in the provinces in question was considerably less. When I pointed out to M. Beck that in saying so he had brought in a purely political consideration, he replied that the consideration was not a political, but a purely social one, insofar as the aim of the Agrarian Reform Law was to break up first the excessively large estates and turn them over to the peasants. As it happened, the largest agricultural estates, he said, were in German hands, and, consequently, the wider expropriation of German estates was in perfect harmony with the legal provisions and the principles of social justice.

Beck's arguments have no validity whatever, and I told him so emphatically. First, as to the contention that Agrarian Reform would be carried through completely within a few years: It seems likely that financial considerations alone will necessitate a much longer period, even if, in accordance with the wishes of M. Poniatowski, Minister for Agriculture, the process were considerably hastened. Apart from this, it is so far impossible to determine whether, in the face of the constantly growing opposition to Agrarian Reform, the parcelling will ever be successfully completed. At all events, there is not the slightest justification for putting the German landowners at the head of the list. As for voluntary parcelling, the cases in which this occurred were not, according to the figures in our hands, so numerous as to justify the unfavorable treatment accorded the German minority. The contention that the largest agricultural estates were in German hands is likewise wholly mistaken. As a matter of fact, the large German estates have been expropriated long ago, and the Polish estates now preponderate in all categories.

M. Beck, who had no figures at hand, then proposed to resume conversations after his return from Rome, as he was anxious not to leave any misunderstandings. I agreed to this, and shall take occasion to report again after further conversations have taken place.*

von Moltke

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* Concerning this question further conversations subsequently took place both with the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs and his experts. The Poles had to admit that German landed property had actually been subjected to Agrarian Reform to a considerably larger extent than Polish. The Germans emphatically pointed out that this obvious discrimination against the German minority could no longer be accepted, and that on the strength of the Minorities Declaration, equal rights and equal treatment of the German minority would be expected in the matter of Agrarian Reform. The negotiations aimed, in the first place, at the elimination of the discrimination which the list of 1938 contained. The German wishes, however, were not complied with.

No. 161 The State Secretary of the Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, November 9, 1938

As the Embassy is aware, the competent Polish departments have for some time been engaged in preliminary work on the annual List of Names for the Agrarian Reform which is to appear next February. We must avoid, as much as possible, this list's resulting in much more German minority property than Polish property being called in for compulsory parcelling, as was the case in previous years. It therefore seems imperative to inform the Polish Government forthwith that we definitely expect a new list which, in contrast to previous lists, will attach for expropriation only that amount of German-owned landed property which corresponds to the ratio of German property in the total area subject to the Agrarian Reform.

I request you to approach the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in this matter as soon as possible, and, in so doing, to refer especially to Point 5 of the Minorities Declaration of November 5, 1937. In the course of the negotiations preceding the Declaration, the Polish Government were expressly given to understand—and they did not contradict it (Cf. telegraphic report of August 26, 1937)*—that Point 5 was expressly intended to preclude any discrimination against members of the German minority in the Agrarian Reform. I request you to add that the German Government definitely expect that the Polish Government, in drawing up the 1939 List of Names, will take into account the fact that the land owned by the German minority has hitherto been requisitioned for Agrarian Reform to a considerably greater extent than Polish-owned property.

I should be grateful for a report on your *démarche* and its outcome.

Weizsäcker

No. 162 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, November 22, 1938

Your instructions regarding the further enforcement of Agrarian Reform were carried out in a conversation with Count Lubienski, Head

* Cf. No. 95, also Nos. 94 and 104.

of the Foreign Minister's Cabinet. This complex of questions had already been discussed with Count Lubienski last March, after the publication of the previous List of Names; he had at the time declared himself ready to talk over with the Polish Minister of Agriculture the matter of discrimination against the German landowners. Count Lubienski has now repeated his statement that no discrimination against German landowners was intended in carrying out the Agrarian Reform. The lists were compiled objectively without consideration of the owner's nationality.

Count Lubienski was told in reply that the manner in which Agrarian Reform had hitherto been carried out in Poland had created the perfectly justified impression on the German side that it was primarily a policy of wholesale de-Germanization. Decisive in the matter was the fact that proportionately more than twice as much German landed property had been requisitioned as Polish. The publication of the List of Names in February of this year had aroused the indignation of the German public, the more so because the Minorities Declaration had led people to expect a more equitable handling of the matter. Should the Minister of Agriculture fail to understand our point of view and continue his policy of de-Germanization, a very serious repercussion on German public opinion must be expected.

von Moltke

No. 163 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, February 15, 1939

According to a telephone message from the German Embassy in Warsaw, today's Polish Law Gazette publishes the List of Names of landowners whose property is to be requisitioned for cumpulsory parcelling in the course of Agrarian Reform in 1939. According to this list the proportion of German-owned land is as follows:—

In the voivodeship of Posen, 12,142 hectares of German-owned land, out of a total area of 20,275 hectares;

In the voivodeship of Pommerellen, 12,538 hectares of German-owned land, out of a total of 17,437 hectares;

In the voivodeship of Upper Silesia, 6,813 hectares of German-owned land, out of a total area of 7,438 hectares.

These measures are in flat contradiction to the German-Polish Minorities Declaration of November 5, 1937, and to the repeated assurances

given by the Polish Government that there was to be no discrimination against members of the German minority in the process of Agrarian Reform. The German "available land"* in Posen and Pommerellen amounts to only about one-third of the whole area subject to Agrarian Reform.

Schliep

No. 164 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Thorn, February 16, 1939

New Lists of Names regarding Agrarian Reform had devastating effect upon German circles here, the more so because far more favorable result had been expected after Warsaw visit of Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs.

German expropriations in Pommerellen will amount to roughly 12,600 hectares, as against 8,600 hectares last year. German share in the compulsory parcelling scheme this year is about 65%, which is more than last year. Especially noteworthy this year is the fact that the middle class has been more extensively hit, as well as the fact that several landowners have been subjected to repeated parcelling.

Küchler

No. 165 The State Secretary of the Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, February 16, 1939

I request you immediately to express to Foreign Minister or, failing this, to his deputy, surprise that the latest List of Names again shows incredible discrimination against German landowners in Posen and Pommerellen, contrary to the Minorities Declaration and the more recent assurances** on the part of the Polish Government.

Wire report.

Weizsäcker

* Cf. Footnote to No. 157.
** Cf. No. 162.

No. 166 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, February 17, 1939

As M. Beck is ill and Count Szembek away, I carried out instructions *in re* Agrarian Reform by calling on M. Arciszewski, State Under-Secretary, who has been especially commissioned by M. Beck to deal with the question.

M. Arciszewski declared that Foreign Ministry's pro-minority standpoint had met with great resistance in the Council of Ministers. In their view the question of an equitable parcelling of German and Polish land was to be judged by ownership proportions not in separate provinces, but in the whole State. In face of these difficulties the Foreign Ministry had given up the attempt to alter the list drawn up for Pommerellen, the Agrarian Reform being almost completed there, and had confined themselves to demanding that in the voivodeship of Posen the 50-50 principle should be established, and maintained in the future. In this, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had been successful.

I replied that we were compelled to regard the Polish standpoint respecting Pommerellen as an intolerable discrimination. As regards Posen, our exact statistics showed that the proportion of German-owned land there requisitioned for compulsory parcelling considerably exceeded 50%. Apart from this, we could not see our way to accepting the 50-50 principle, as the German-owned land constituted only 30% of the total area; moreover, it had already been requisitioned in previous years to a disproportionate extent.

M. Arciszewski asked for our figures. For exact data I have applied to the Consulate-General at Posen.*

Moltke

No. 167 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, February 21, 1939

More precise figures compiled meanwhile by the Association of German Landowners in Eastern Upper Silesia show that of the area given in the List of Names, viz., 7,483 hectares, only 100 hectares are Polish

* Cf. Nos. 170, 171 and 172. Subsequent discussions with the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs also had no result.

property. Consequently, 98.7% of the land requisitioned in the List is German-owned, although Eastern Upper Silesia contains more Polish property than German. Thus practically all the German "available land"* in my district has been brought under the act.

Nöldeke

No. 168 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, February 21, 1939

The past week was entirely colored by the new expropriations of German estates. The publication of the List of Names fell like a bombshell, coming as it did only a few weeks after the visit of the German Foreign Minister to Warsaw,** from which visit the German minority had expected a great improvement in the German-Polish relations. The hope that now discrimination against the German minority here would finally cease, has proved deceptive.

The effects of the expropriations under the new List of Names will be dealt with in a separate report today, which will show the catastrophic situation of some landowners. Medium-sized properties are the most severely hit, since several of them, because they are situated in a certain zone, have been reduced to 60 hectares and thus can no longer maintain themselves.

A comparative survey of German and Polish landed property expropriated in Pommerellen by means of Lists of Names, from the institution of the Agrarian Reform Law of December 28, 1925, to the end of 1938, shows that the German landowners have so far lost 56,214 hectares, which is 72% of the total area expropriated by this method, whereas the Polish landowners appear on the Lists of Names hitherto published with only 22,093 hectares or 28% of the total area. The expectation that the disproportionate, and entirely unjustified, discrimination against German landowners would be counterbalanced in this year's List of Names by the subjection of Polish landowners to an increased measure of expropriation, has not been fulfilled. On the contrary, the German landowners are at an even greater disadvantage this year than in previous years.

* Cf. footnote to No. 157.
** Cf. No. 202.

The Polish authorities seem to be bent on a rapid and complete annihilation of the German element; at any rate, the general attitude toward Germanism which has recently become apparent is more hostile than ever.

It is clear that, in these circumstances, extraordinary excitement prevails among the German population, whose justified hopes and whose loyalty to the Polish State have been bitterly disappointed. A feeling of insecurity, and a conviction that rightful claims will find no bearing are prevalent here and difficult to allay. I would call special attention to the fact that the desire to emigrate is again becoming very marked.

von Küchler

X. Further Efforts on the Part of Germany to Improve the Position of the German Minority by Means of German-Polish Discussions

(November, 1937 to March, 1939)

No. 169 Memorandum of the Director of the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, November 25, 1937

The Polish Chargé d'Affaires called on me today in another connection and I took the occasion to remind him that the Aide-Mémoire* presented to the Polish Ambassador at the beginning of November by the German Minister, upon the delivery of the German-Polish Minorities Declaration, expressed the German suggestion that periodic discussions should take place between representatives of the two States regarding the questions dealt with in the Minorities Declaration. An answer to this German suggestion has not yet been received. These discussions were intended to remove such questions from the sphere of politics, and bring about a satisfactory solution by a joint effort. Our home administration was considering measures definitely favorable to the Polish minority, and saw in the proposed discussions a means of continuing along the lines laid down in the Minorities Declaration. It would therefore be highly desirable that we should receive a positive answer to our proposal at an early date, in order to be able to start on practical work. The Chargé d'Affaires, for his part, likewise declared this to be desirable, and promised a speedy reply.**

Fürst von Bismarck

No. 170 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, May 30, 1938

The anticipation that the position of the German minority in Poland would be materially improved by the Joint Declaration of November 5, 1937, by the German and Polish Governments, concerning the treatment of their respective minorities, has unfortunately not been realized.

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* Cf. No. 104, Appendix.

** On January 12, 1938, information was received from the Polish Chargé d'Affaires that periodic discussions between the representatives of the respective governments on minority questions, as suggested by Germany, were regarded as premature by Poland.

In the last six months the German community in Poland has been deprived more rapidly than ever of its most vital basis of existence—its landed property. This has been done by subjecting the minority still more rigorously to Agrarian Reform, and by a stricter application of the Frontier Zones Law* since July 1, 1937. In practice the provisions of this law mean that in the whole of Polish Upper Silesia, in the greater part of Pommerellen, and in a considerable part of the former Province of Posen, any acquisition of land—even by inheritance—is made impossible. Not even leases or other usufructuary contracts are approved if the lease holder or the usufructuary is a member of the German minority. This means that the land which is still in the hands of Germans, insofar as it is not requisitioned for Agrarian Reform, will be lost to the German minority when the present owner dies.

Apart from this action to oust members of the German minority from their estates and holdings, German business men and manufacturers are deprived of their livelihood by an economic boycott organized by the West Marches Society, which is fostered by the Polish Government.

More and more German workmen, especially in Upper Silesia, are being deprived of their positions, while large numbers of Polish workmen are finding employment in consequence of the trade boom. As much as a year ago, 70% of the German workers in Upper Silesia were out of work, and to find apprenticeships for German youths is practically impossible.

In the cultural sphere the Polish Government's policy of de-Germanization manifests itself in the closing of schools, and in economic pressure upon parents who send their children to German schools.

On all these subjects I have constantly made emphatic representations to the Polish Government, and I am continuing to do so, because so far the Polish Government have met hardly any of our wishes. In this connection I have again and again pointed out that the fate of the German minority in Poland fills us with anxiety, and that the constant discrimination against the German minority in Poland must of necessity have an adverse effect upon our neighborly relations. According to my instructions, I have drawn attention to the fact that everywhere in the Reich the Polish minority are earning their livelihood, whereas the Germans in Poland, despite the economic improvement recognizable there, are deprived of their economic basis solely on account of their Germanism. Apart from this, the best proof of our readiness to deal with complaints affecting the minorities is our proposal, repeatedly made to the Polish Government, to arrange for periodic discussions between German and Polish experts, a suggestion which the Polish Government, unfortunately, has not acted upon so far.

* Cf. No. 88, last footnote to Appendix.

In accordance with instructions, I shall go on suggesting a discussion on the minorities question, but I should be grateful if the Foreign Office could bring its influence to bear on the Polish Embassy in Berlin with the same end in view.

von Moltke

No. 171 The German Foreign Minister to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, June 29, 1938

We also think it advisable to make petition of Association of Poles dated June 2, and increased minorities tension resultant therefrom, occasion for again proposing to Polish Government negotiations concerning complaints of both minorities. Please approach Foreign Minister Beck as soon as possible, bringing forward following considerations:

Petition of Polish League had been carefully examined by German Government who were ready to meet justified wishes of Polish minority. This readiness on part of Government had already found expression in redressing certain grievances, and in reception accorded to representatives of Polish minority by Minister for Home Affairs. In subsequent treatment of these questions, however, we could not be expected to disregard position of German minority in Poland who, in our opinion, had far greater cause for complaint. Representatives of Polish minority had admitted to German Minister for Home Affairs that economically they had no cause whatever for complaint. Over against this, it must be pointed out that Germans in Poland are deprived of their means of support solely on grounds of their Germanism, although Poland, too, shows economic improvement.

Particular disappointment was caused by negative result of negotiations conducted by Embassy concerning agrarian measures against German minority,* in which negotiations Polish Government had identified themselves with discriminatory standpoint of West Marches Society, according to which German share in landed property was to be adapted to percentage of German population.

Nor can question of application of Frontier Zones Decree remain in abeyance, as evictions of German owners who a year ago had been denied permission to take over inherited land are soon to be expected. There is danger that imminent evictions of such minority Germans may intensify existing indignation of German frontier population, and thus have serious repercussions on Polish minority in Germany, unless a timely remedy is found.

* Cf. footnote to No. 160.

Further source of constant popular anxiety in Germany is the continued dismissal of German employees in Eastern Upper Silesia, as well as economic boycott organized by West Marches Society. You might point out that Poland has done nothing in return for permission to found Polish Secondary School at Marienwerder,* and draw attention to rigorous proceedings on part of educational authorities against German schools in Volhynia, where 5,800 of 7,500 German children of school age received only inadequate instruction or none at all in German language.

Furthermore, please point out to M. Beck that tension in Polish western provinces has increased owing to complaint of Polish League and treatment of that complaint in Polish press. German Government are anxiously watching this development, which threatens to disturb our otherwise friendly relations, and consider it urgently necessary to counteract it by frank discussion, in order to promote understanding in minorities question as initiated by Minorities Declaration. They therefore suggest having complaints of minorities immediately examined by experts of both countries, and settling them as far as possible.

Please wire concerning reception of your *démarche*.

Ribbentrop

No. 172 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, July 9, 1938

Acting on instructions of 29th ult.,** I raised the minorities question with M. Beck to-day. I pointed out especially that the non-fulfilment of Polish obligations under the special agreement concerning Marienwerder*** had seriously impaired the effectiveness of the Minorities Agreement of November 5.† The fact that to date—i. e. after ten months—permission had not been granted to continue building the school at Bromberg, had naturally created the impression in Germany that there was no inclination whatever on Poland's part to put the principles of November 5 into practice. I further stated that the negotiations about Agrarian Reform†† clearly stated that there was discrimination against the German minority. In conclusion, I declared with special emphasis that the complaint made by the Polish minority in Germany, and the way in which this complaint was treated in the Polish press, had done all kinds of harm. What has happened is just what we sought to prevent by our

* Cf. Nos. 111, 114, 115, 117 and 135.
** Cf. No. 171.
*** Cf. Nos. 111, 114, 115, 117 and 135.
† Cf. No. 101.
†† Cf. Last footnote to No. 160, No. 162, and footnote to No. 166.

Agreement of November 5, namely, that the minorities question has become a subject for political altercation, and that, in consequence, the atmosphere in Poland, especially in the minority areas, has become very much worse.

I then added that, in the future treatment of the Polish minority's complaint, we could not disregard the position of the German minority in Poland, and that in our opinion it would be more to the point if, instead of attacking each other publicly, we could arrange a frank discussion of the problem. Therefore our proposal was that competent officials in the respective Ministries for Home Affairs, assisted by an official from each of the two Ministries for Foreign Affairs, should meet periodically in order to examine the various minorities problems in frank discussion, undisturbed by the press. From our standpoint the problem of the minorities could very well be treated in that same manner which had yielded favorable results in the periodic discussions of economic questions and press matters. We therefore requested the Polish Government to examine our proposal, which we hoped would promote the understanding initiated by the Minorities Declaration, and thus relieve the tension in political relations in an important respect.

M. Beck began by stating that he was extremely sorry if the agreement made with regard to Marienwerder had not yet been wholly carried out on the part of Poland. He claimed he had not been aware of this, but would see to it at once that the matter was settled at last.* He, too, was of the opinion, he said, that the treatment of minorities problems by the press was harmful rather than useful. At the time when Berlin's complaint about the treatment of the minority had led to a certain amount of press agitation here, he had immediately intervened, but he admitted that his intervention had been too late to be completely successful. He, too, was an advocate of frank discussion, and he thought this the best manner to make headway in difficult problems. He, therefore, was wholly in sympathy with our proposal. Of course he was not in a position, he added, to give me a definite answer at once, as the matter went beyond his jurisdiction. As soon as possible—though unfortunately not next week, because of his journey to Riga—he would lay the whole matter before the Prime Minister, who was also Minister for Home Affairs, and he could assure me today that he would support our proposal. He withheld his answer until that time.

The reason for the apparent change in the negative attitude hitherto adopted towards the idea of a Minorities Committee may be that this time we initiated our action at a particularly favorable moment. The Polish failure to uphold the gentlemen's agreement** seemed quite unpleasant for M. Beck. Probably he felt also that the press campaign started in connection with the Polish minority's complaint was not consonant with the aims and intentions which led to the Agreement of

* No final settlement of the matter was reached.
** Cf. Nos. 111, 114, 115, 117 and 135.

November 5. Furthermore, the Polish violation of the Minorities Declaration, now incontrovertibly established in the Agrarian Reform question, may have contributed to convincing M. Beck that it was now necessary to make us a friendly gesture in the minorities question. However, one should not entertain too high hopes for a fundamental change in the Polish policy toward the minorities.

von Moltke

No. 173 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, July 19, 1938

Count Lubienski, Head of the Cabinet of the Polish Foreign Ministry, asked me to call on him yesterday. He informed me that M. Beck, who had gone away on a week's holiday, had instructed him to communicate the answer to the proposal made by Herr von Moltke concerning the appointment of a Minorities Committee. The answer which Count Lubienski read to me from his notes was worded as follows: "The Polish Government does not decline in principle Herr von Moltke's proposal that contact should be established between representatives of the home administrations of both countries."

The wording of the answer makes it clear that the Polish Foreign Ministry considers it valuable not to show too great eagerness in this matter. When I asked Count Lubienski how he viewed future developments, he stated that, though discussions were being contemplated for next autumn, he could not give any further particulars at the present stage of developments.*

von Wühlisch

No. 174 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, February 11, 1939

According to instructions received in your telegram of February 6, the Polish Government were informed that we expected them to adhere to the date which they fixed for minorities negotiations, i. e., February 13, and that we expected no disruption of basis of negotiations by *faits*

* In the course of the following months the Embassy repeatedly reverted to the matter, but always in vain. On the occasion of his presence in Warsaw in January 1939, the German Foreign Minister again took up the matter of the Minorities Committee, whereupon its appointment was at last decided Cf. No. 202.

accomplis, especially by the List of Names for Agrarian Reform. The cool reception accorded this communication made it evident that, despite previous assurances, the List of Names* will probably take little account of the wishes we expressed to the Polish Government. Information was received today from the Polish Foreign Ministry that the Polish representatives will not be able to arrive in Berlin until February 16 or 17. The obvious purpose of this delay is to postpone the opening of the minorities negotiations until after the date (February 15) legally fixed for drawing up the List of Names. The Polish Foreign Ministry were thereupon again informed that we must request them not to confront us with *faits accomplis* in the question of Agrarian Reform; to which the expert in charge evasively replied that he did not know the date of the publication of the List of Names, but that he would continue his efforts to have our wishes gratified.**

The treatment of this question, along with other indications, indicates that unfortunately the Polish Government departments are entering upon these minorities negotiations only with reluctance.

Moltke

No. 175 Memorandum of an Official of the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, February 26, 1939

In the German-Polish minorities negotiations opened yesterday afternoon, an agenda was proposed to the Poles and accepted by them. Today discussion was begun on item I (questions of frontier zones)*** and item II (questions of Agrarian Reform).†

The Polish delegation showed very little inclination to come to a concrete settlement of the question of frontier zones.

A discussion of Agrarian Reform by the Minorities Committee was considered inappropriate by the Polish delegation, as discussions on this point were already pending between the German Embassy in Warsaw and the Polish Foreign Ministry.††

The negotiations will be continued tomorrow morning. The Polish delegation expressed the intention of returning to Warsaw as early as tomorrow evening (March 1). Efforts are being made to induce the Polish delegates to stay on, as it is impossible to discuss the whole program thoroughly in so short a time.

Bergmann

* Cf. No. 162.
** On February 15, a List of Names actually appeared, again in complete violation of the promises made in the Minorities Declaration. Cf. No. 163 ff.
*** Cf. No. 88, last footnote to appendix.
† Cf. No. 156 ff.
†† Cf. No. 166.

No. 176 The State Secretary of the Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, March 4, 1939

Germany proposed the following final *communiqué* to the Polish representatives last night: "From February 27 to March 3, the first conversations were held between representatives of the German and Polish Governments concerning questions affecting the German minority in Poland and the Polish minority in the Reich. The conversations offered the representatives of the German and Polish internal administrations an opportunity of establishing direct contact with one another. The discussions included both broad questions of principle and the specific claims of both parties in all matters affecting the minorities. It was agreed that these questions and claims should be examined by the respective Governments in the spirit of goodwill shown by both sides, in order that the rights and interests of the minority groups be given fair consideration.

"The discussions will be continued as soon as possible."

Polish representatives have agreed to this formulation, except for last sentence, in place of which they have proposed following wording:

"The discussions will be resumed."

Ambassador Lipski today approved wording suggested by Polish representatives, on ground that German formulation of concluding sentence might cause agitation among minorities.

As Polish attitude in the discussion has created definite impression that Poland wants to avoid further discussions on minority questions by the Committee, I ask you, on behalf of Foreign Minister, to request M. Beck to agree to German wording. Please add that reasons given by M. Lipski have astonished the German Minister, as, when discussions at Warsaw were agreed upon, early continuation of discussions by Committee had been expressly arranged in order to attain positive and concrete results.

Telegraphic report requested.

Weizsäcker

No. 177 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, March 10, 1939

As instructed, I questioned M. Beck about concluding sentence of *communiqué* regarding minorities discussions. M. Beck, who confirmed

contents of conversation with German Foreign Minister, was unacquainted with details of *communiqué* and promised early answer. On Foreign Minister's instructions, Count Lubienski, Head of the Cabinet, submitted following proposals:

1. *Communiqué* will be published with concluding sentence proposed by Polish representatives.
2. Head of Cabinet, on behalf of Foreign Minister, makes declaration to the effect that discussions will be resumed immediately after publication of results of German census (probably beginning of June).
3. Should this proposal not satisfy Berlin, Foreign Minister Beck would be ready to discuss matter once more with Polish Premier. Count Lubienski unofficially remarked that, in Ministry for Home Affairs, there was great opposition to our wording of concluding sentence, as no conclusion had yet been reached as to usefulness of minorities discussions.

I am inclined to assume that insistence upon renewed submission of matter to Polish Premier might succeed in obtaining—not, however, without loss of time—a formulation of the concluding sentence more in keeping with our wishes. This would not, however, produce any change in the Polish attitude on date of next discussion.*

Moltke

No. 178 The German Minister for Home Affairs to the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, March 4, 1939

The negotiations on the minorities questions, which were begun under my direction with representatives of the Polish Government on February 27, were concluded yesterday. Minutes of the course of the discussions will be forwarded shortly.

The negotiations have unfortunately had a wholly unsatisfactory result. The Poles have no intention of changing their policy towards the German minority in any way. In some less important matters, they may be ready to make small concessions; but in the really vital questions concerning the German minority, they are determined vigorously to continue their policy of de-Germanization.

By Order

Vollert

* Since there was no agreement on the continuation of the negotiations, no communique was published.

No. 179 Agreement Between the Senate of the Free City of Danzig and the Polish Government, August 5, 1933*

(Translation)

The Senate of the Free City of Danzig and the Polish Government being desirous of settling by mutual consent certain questions in dispute between the two Governments, have decided, under the auspices of the High Commissioner of the League of Nations, as follows:

I. The Senate of the Free City of Danzig and the Polish Government agree to suspend, for the duration of the present agreement, the action now pending before the League of Nations concerning the question of the use of the Port of Danzig.

II. The Polish Government will immediately take all the necessary steps to prevent a decrease in the sea-borne traffic (imports, exports and transit) now passing through the Port of Danzig. Both the quantity and the quality of the goods will be taken into account.

The Polish Government, as far as lies within its power, will ensure the Port of Danzig equal participation in sea-borne traffic (imports, exports and transit), taking into account the quantity and the quality of the goods. For this purpose, the parties undertake to maintain regular contact by means of periodic meetings.

III. In so far as the financial and economic capacities of the Free City allow, the Senate of the Free City of Danzig will co-operate with the Polish Government in developing direct sea-borne traffic.

IV. Each of the parties reserves the right to ask the High Commissioner, on three months' notice, to resume the action pending before him.

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* On August 5, 1933, in addition to the agreement quoted above concerning the full utilization of Danzig Harbor, which was amplified by a final protocol, an agreement "concerning the treatment of Polish nationals and other persons of Polish origin or language in the territory of the Free City of Danzig" was concluded and was elucidated by an exchange of Notes. A further exchange of Notes between Danzig and Poland on the same date dealt with the regulation of questions at issue concerning instruments of ratification, passports, and the issuance of exequaturs to consuls in Danzig.

The initiation of the Agreements of August 5, 1933, dates back to the visit of the Senate of Danzig to Warsaw on July 3, 1933, in the course of which both parties, Danzig as well as Poland, expressed the wish that direct negotiations should be initiated between them on the numerous Danzig-Polish questions at issue.

No. 180 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, May 9, 1934

At a meeting on April 20 last, the "Society of Poles in the Free City of Danzig" adopted a program which was published in the Society's journal, the *Straz Gdanska,* on the 1st inst. The program consciously aims to Polonize economic affairs in Danzig, and to restrict the rights of Danzig's German inhabitants.

Particular attention should be given to the following provisions:

Paragraph 3 of the program states that the Society of Poles aims at educating Danzig Poles to national consciousness. They should be willing to make every sacrifice for the national cause and for the welfare of the Polish community. For this purpose the Society is developing a program of systematic propaganda and active organization.

Paragraph 7 states that the Society of Poles regards the Free City as an "indispensable and inseparable part of the economic organism of Poland", and aims "at the closest possible union of Danzig with Poland, and the closest co-operation between Poland and Danzig in all spheres of economic life."

Paragraph 9 demands the union of Danzig economic and professional organizations with organizations in Poland, and the adaptation of Danzig commercial and financial legislation to Polish legislation.

Finally, paragraph 11 states that the domestic policy of the Free City must harmonize with the policy of the Polish Government. The Society of Poles regards co-operation and understanding with the Polish authorities as the basis of its activity.

von Radowitz

No. 181 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, August 8, 1934

The Economic Agreements, signed in Danzig on August 6 between Danzig and Poland, form an integral whole. The aim of the Danzig Government was to obtain a contractual settlement on economic affairs by the elimination of the hitherto existing hindrances to the exchange of goods between Danzig and Poland, the abolition of Polish economic supervision, and the clarification of the vexed questions which had for

years been a stumbling-block in the economic and political relations between Danzig and Poland. The aims of the Danzig Government may be said to have been substantially achieved, provided that the Agreements are loyally observed by the other party.

As far as the individual agreements are concerned, the following points should be noted:—

(1) The Agreement concerning Danzig's share in the Polish import quotas puts an end to a quarrel of many years standing over the Danzig quotas for home requirements, and over economic supervision.

For the term of the Agreement, Danzig waives its right to quotas for home requirements, in return for which Poland guarantees to Danzig shares in the Polish import quotas for prohibited goods. The Danzig shares are calculated in percentages for each commodity. When this Agreement was signed, Poland's diplomatic representative made a declaration to the effect that, in pursuance of the new arrangement, economic supervision would be abolished. The same statement is contained in a joint official press notice, released at the time the Agreement was signed.

(2) The Agreement concerning traffic in foodstuffs and other vitally necessary commodities is also intended to do away with the hitherto existing economic frontier between Danzig and Poland. It stipulates that traffic in these goods between Danzig and Poland is free, that the trade of either of these countries with foreign lands across the other country is also free. The same is true of passenger traffic. Thus the embargoes which Poland, within the last few months, has placed upon margarine, oils, fats, cheese, and fish will no longer be possible. In return, the Agreement contains an undertaking on the part of Danzig that it will observe the corresponding Polish laws and regulations.

(3) The Veterinary Agreement and the Agreement for Plant Protection contain arrangements of a more technical kind. Each State preserves its internal independence in this sphere.

(4) The Agreement concerning traffic in agricultural produce and fish regulates the sale in Danzig territory of such commodities of Polish origin, in order to prevent Danzig agriculture from being ruined by an unrestricted flow of Polish agricultural produce into Danzig territory. Polish imports are placed under quotas, generally equivalent to the amounts that Poland has actually sold to Danzig in the last few years. In return for this concession on the part of Poland, Danzig agrees with certain reservations, to accord Danzig prices to Polish produce.

(5) The Agreement concerning the settlement of various customs questions gave rise to the greatest difficulties in the negotiations; several times the negotiations threatened to break down. Poland interwove the question of customs with economic questions, in order to be in a position to exert pressure on Danzig in customs matters. The object of Poland's

power politics was to deprive Danzig of its right to organize its own customs service; to obtain a part and voice in the arrangements for Polish customs inspectors, which would enable them to control the whole customs service in Danzig; to get the Danzig customs officials practically into Poland's power; and to force Danzig to execute all decrees of the Polish Minister of Finance, regardless of their legality, until such time as a legally enforceable decision had been obtained from League of Nations authorities. These Polish aims have not been realized. Danzig, however, in order to reach an agreement on economic questions, has been obliged to make considerable concessions. As far as organization is concerned, these concessions are unimportant. Danzig reserves unimpaired its right to organize the customs service in Danzig territory. There has been but little change unfavorable to Danzig's legal position in the question of customs supervision by Polish inspectors. On the other hand, the struggle over the Danzig customs officials was very serious. Poland aimed at a solution which would have been the pragmatic equivalent of that adopted in the case of the railways in Danzig territory, and would have had the same devastating effects. After months of negotiations, it has at last been agreed that, in certain circumstances, Poland shall have the right of vetoing appointments to the office of Head of the Danzig Customs Department and certain other important posts in the customs service, and can also demand the dismissal of these officials. As for Poland's demand that Danzig should bind itself to carry out all decrees of the Minister of Finance, subject to a subsequent decision by the League of Nations authorities, the settlement made is fairly tolerable for Danzig. With regard to this, Article 12 states in substance that the measures of the Polish Finance Minister are binding on Danzig, but not in the sphere of the special Danzig rights contained in Annex II (Customs) to the Warsaw Agreement. Finally, Danzig has successfully opposed the Polish demand that Danzig customs officials take an oath supporting the common interests of both countries in the joint customs area.

The individual agreements will come into force on September 1, with the exception of the Agricultural Agreement, which will come into force on August 10. All these agreements are valid for a period of two years, and are subject to renewal.

von Radowitz

No. 182 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, January 9, 1935

At the beginning of August, 1934, a Polish Sports Committee (*Rada Sportowa*) was founded in Danzig, with headquarters in the Military

Department of the Diplomatic Agency of the Polish Republic, Neugarten 27, Danzig. It is under the leadership of the Chief of the Military Department, Lieutenant Antoni Rosner. The Sports Committee is the leading organization of all Polish clubs of a semi-military character in Danzig, which are affiliated to the *Strzelec* (Rifle Club) in Poland. The Sports Committee in Danzig is only a camouflaged form of the Rifle Club. Its object is to gather together all the clubs mentioned above in order to give their members a uniform military training.

At present the Sports Committee comprises the following Polish associations:

1. Reserve Officers' Association.
2. Reserve N. C. O.s' Association.
3. The Associated Former Volunteers of Danzig Nationality in the Polish Army.
4. Legionnaires' Association.
5. Ex-Soldiers' Club.
6. Sokol Falcon Club.
7. Boy Scouts.
8. Youth Club.
9. Guard of the Association of Poles.
10. Sports Division of the Organization for the Preliminary Military Training of Railwaymen.
11. Organization for the Preliminary Military Training of Postal Officials and Employees.
12. Academic Aero Club.
13. Academic Sport Club.
14. Gedania Sport Club.
15. Rowing Club.
16. Yachting or Marine Club.
17. Air Raid and Gas Defense League.

The associations enumerated are empowered by the Sports Committee to carry out the military training of their members independently, but under the direction and constant supervision of army officers. In general, their activity consists in taking untrained youths and soldiers discharged after service, and making or keeping them fit for military service. Systematic military exercises, such as drill, field-work and rifle practice are held for the Danzig members of the Sports Committee at Gdynia, Dirschau, and their surroundings. Theoretical instruction is given in the Polish railway-office building here, and at the house of the diplomatic representative of the Polish Republic in Danzig.

The military training for members is given by Captains Szagon, Steranski and Krukierek of the military department, Lieutenants Kucharski and Kubalski, Commander Eibel, Customs Commissioners Tarnowiecki,

Lipinski, Manczyk and Peszkowski, and Captain Wit-Wlosek of the Danzig Bureau. The Sports Committee receives ample support and encouragement from the diplomatic representative of the Polish Republic in Danzig. Consequently it is in a position to develop great activity in the territory of the Free City of Danzig.

von Radowitz

No. 183 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, February 7, 1935

As I have previously reported on December 7, 1934, the Senate, in discussing the situation brought about by the wholesale dismissals of December last, left it to the discretion of the representatives of the German-born railroad workers of Danzig to call public meetings in protest against the Polish procedure. A meeting of this kind took place in the local exhibition hall last Sunday, February 3, 1935, at 10 a. m., and was widely attended by all classes of the Danzig population.

After Herr Kendzia, a member of the Danzig Diet, had opened the meeting, Herr Nicklas, chairman of the Trades Union of Railway Harbor Officials and Assistants within the territory of the Free City of Danzig, and also a member of the Danzig Diet, gave an address, in which he went thoroughly into the question of the treatment which the Polish railway authorities had accorded to their German-born employees ever since the administration of the Danzig railways had been handed over to the Poles. Quoting exact statistics he showed how, during the last 13 years, the Polish management had systematically dismissed the German element from the Danzig railways in favor of Polish-born men, contrary to all commitments and obligations under International Law. The methods adopted by the Poles in their fight against this group of the Danzig Germans, as revealed by Nicklas in his speech, fully explained why the speaker at times used exceedingly sharp words.

How distinctly unpleasant this protest meeting was to the Polish management of the railways, is shown by the fact that, as soon as notices of the meeting had been posted all over Danzig, the Polish diplomatic representative here handed the Danzig Senate an aide-mémoires, with the request that the meeting be immediately forbidden. The reason offered was that this demonstration would seriously strain Polish-Danzig relations. He maintained that the Polish Government had fully met the wishes of the Danzig Government some time ago, by re-instating a certain number of dismissed railway employees. In view of the fact that the

Polish measures against the railway employees are completely unfounded and that the indignation of those employees is quite comprehensible, the Senate have replied to the Polish Diplomatic Agency that they see no reason to forbid the prospective meeting; the more so as the Danzig constitution guarantees Danzig nationals the right to hold meetings, provided that public safety, law and order are not endangered. The Senate are convinced that the participants will not endanger public safety, law and order, in spite of their righteous indignation. The presence of sufficient police will serve as a further guarantee of this.

Apparently the Polish Diplomatic Agency will not take up the matter again. But the semi-official *Gazeta Polska,* in an article appearing in its issue No. 36, of last February 5, under the heading "An action which does not facilitate co-operation," makes the protest meeting a pretext for running down Representative Nicklas' speech as demagogic, though his assertions could not be refuted in detail.

I feel that I must avail myself of this opportunity to draw your special attention to the ruthlessness of the Polish procedure in this matter, which constitutes a jarring accompaniment to the German-Polish understanding.

von Radowitz

No. 184 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, April 15, 1935

During the last few days, the Polish management of the Thorn Railway has again given notice, through its Danzig branch, to some 20 to 25 railway employees of German extraction. These men are to leave when the next legal term of notice expires. The majority of the dismissed men have been in the service of the Railways for a period of more than twelve years, some of them even for 16, 19 or 22 years. As most of them have several children, this sudden dismissal from service is a particular hardship. The Polish authorities gave no reasons for their dismissal.

The Senate immediately lodged a protest with the Polish diplomatic representative in Danzig against the above mentioned dismissals, and requested him to examine the case thoroughly, as well as to take steps to ensure the further employment of the dismissed men.

von Radowitz

No. 185 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, July 24, 1935

As you have already been informed, the Polish Government issued a decree on the 18th inst., to the effect that the customs offices in the Danzig customs area are to accept for clearance only such foreign goods as are destined for consumption in the Free City of Danzig. This order came into force on July 21, 1935. According to these regulations, when goods are being examined at customs offices within the territory of the Free City of Danzig, the parties concerned have to show that the same are for interior consumption, that is to say for use within the Free State territory. The significance of this Polish regulation for the economic life of Danzig emerges from the following considerations:

The import-trade which so far has passed through Danzig will be systematically diverted from Danzig by this regulation, because in practice it is impossible to effect the clearance of goods (with ensuing formalities regarding import-permits, certificates of origin, etc.) outside the entrance harbor. In fact, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Warsaw has already issued a publication containing a warning against importation of goods via Danzig. Now if the import-trade is thus purposely withheld from Danzig it will also indirectly affect the entire export-trade which hitherto passed through Danzig, because the close connection of exports with imports—if only by virtue of the fact that the same tonnage is utilized for both—makes it unthinkable that Poland might use the port of Danzig for export only.

Hence it is evident that this Polish decree affects the economic existence of the port of Danzig and of the Free City itself.

Under such circumstances, Herr Greiser, the President of the Danzig Senate, requested the Polish diplomatic representative to call upon him, and handed him the enclosed note of protest from the Senate of the Free City. I am told that the President expressly called M. Papée's attention to the serious consequences of the Polish decree, and stressed the fact that the latter was entirely incompatible with the Danzig-Polish treaties. President Greiser made the following representation.

If the order went into effect, Danzig trade and industry would lose the entire Polish market for foreign goods. This would completely paralyze the port of Danzig, which in its dimensions and its lay-out is entirely adapted to Poland, its natural *hinterland*. The consequent repercussion on all the remaining branches of Danzig's economic life would be catastrophic.

Danzig was included in the Polish customs frontier in order that goods destined for Poland might be cleared in Danzig and forwarded to Poland without further hindrance. This arrangement was made not only in the interest of Poland, but also of Danzig. To this effect one may instance the Warsaw Agreement, under which the Polish Government were bound to frame their customs laws in such a way as to protect the interests of the Free City of Danzig. If only goods destined for Danzig's consumption were to be cleared in Danzig, there would be no reason why they should be cleared in accordance with Polish law and Polish tariffs, why clearance should be supervised by Polish customs-inspectors, why Poland should participate in the duty paid on these goods, why Polish import-permits should be required for the goods, etc. Consequently the new decree was completely incompatible with the Danzig-Polish treaties. Considering the existing legal conditions, and the fact that the execution of this decree would bring lasting and irremediable harm, he, the President, with the approval of the whole Senate, had decided to instruct the Danzig customs administration not to apply it.

In spite of the non-execution of this decree, the Senate realized that its non-execution alone would not suffice to protect the economic life of Danzig from serious injury. The news that the decree had been issued, had in itself proved sufficient to divert a large number of ships and goods from Danzig to Gdynia. So long as this decree was not repealed, not only Polish merchants, but very important international business interests as well, could not be expected to use the port of Danzig and its trading facilities when importing goods from abroad. The consequent losses suffered by Danzig's trade and by its entire population would inevitably be so enormous that Danzig would not be in a position to meet them. For this reason the Danzig Government, in the name of the entire population, must reserve the right to demand compensation for damages, for which Poland alone must be held responsible. On account of economic losses which had already been incurred, and in order to hinder further complications which would doubtless ensue, the Senate asked the diplomatic representative of Poland to plead with his Government for an immediate repeal of this decree.

M. Papée took cognizance of this statement, made on behalf of the Senate, and said that he would go to Warsaw to discuss the question there.*

von Radowitz

* The conflict evoked by this Polish customs decree forced the Danzig Senate to take certain counter-measures (order to import some types of goods into Danzig free of duty.) The conflict was finally settled by an agreement between Danzig and Poland dated August 8, 1935 in which Poland pledged herself to repeal the customs decree of July 18, 1935.

Appendix

The President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig to the Diplomatic Representative of the Polish Republic in Danzig

(Translation)

Danzig, July 23, 1935

Your Excellency,

The Senate has been informed, through the Official Gazette of the Polish Republic, that on July 18 a decree was issued whereby the activities of the Danzig customs offices have been restricted to clearance of such foreign goods as are destined for local consumption, and for use in the territory of the Free City of Danzig.

This decree represents a momentous violation of the legal covenant which binds the Free City of Danzig and the Polish Republic. For this reason I have instructed the Head Customs Office of the Free City of Danzig not to execute this decree.

In transmitting to you, Sir, the protest of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig against this decree, I expect the immediate repeal of the decree.

Moreover the Senate of the Free City of Danzig reserves the right to take any further measures that it may deem necessary in order to protect the interests of Danzig. The Senate especially reserves the right to demand compensation for any damages which may be incurred by the City of Danzig as a result of the decree.

Greiser

No. 186 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, November 8, 1935

I am informed through an entirely reliable source that the Polish Railways administration has made certain arrangements implying that it intends shortly to dismiss all railwaymen of German extraction. Some time ago all the heads of railway departments were summoned to the Danzig railway traffic-manager's office; in the case of German heads of departments still in service, their Polish deputies were ordered to appear. They were all instructed to make preparations for an instantaneous replacement on a date to be determined, of all railwaymen of German extraction by railwaymen of Polish extraction, even down to the switchmen. If the supply of Polish-born railwaymen should prove to be insufficient,

training of suitable persons was to be begun immediately. The officials summoned were ordered to maintain strict silence on the subject.

The authorities here take this news very seriously. It is surmised that more sinister intentions underlie the Polish move to get rid of all its German-born railway officials. Circumstances are envisaged in which Poland might find it vitally important to be able to rely absolutely on every railwayman employed on the Polish railway in Danzig territory, even down to the last linesman and signalman.

For the Consul-General

Koester

No. 187 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, July 17, 1936

On the 17th inst. a large number of associations and organizations, including the Legionaires' Association, War Comrades Associations, the Rifle Club, Trade Unions, Unions of Employees, Boy Scouts, etc., organized a public demonstration in the market-place of the Old Town in Warsaw, under the leadership of the Marine and Colonial Leagues.

According to the posters which invite the population to take part in the demonstrations, and to which every newspaper calls attention, any revision of the Danzig Statute should aim exclusively at an extension of Polish rights in Danzig. Poland alone, they declare, could guarantee the entire population of Danzig full scope for a cultural, political and economic process of development, and secure equal "domestic rights" and privileges for the Polish inhabitants of Danzig.

About 10,000 people took part in the demonstration in the market-place of Warsaw. Besides little local chapters of the Marine and Colonial Leagues, the following organizations were represented: the Legionaires' Association, the Rifle Club, and the Post Office Employees' and the Railwaymen's Trade Unions. The majority of the demonstrators were members of Socialist Trade Unions or of the so-called Moraczewski Trade Unions, which are supporters of the Government. The Socialist Trade Unions marched past singing the "Internationale," and carrying banners inscribed with such slogans as "Supreme Power for Workers and Peasants."

Representatives of the Marine and Colonial Leagues, the Socialist Party, and the Moraczewski Trade Unions, and the Chairman of the "Society of the Defenders of the Fatherland," spoke at the meeting. After the speeches, the resolution was read, which had previously been

announced on the above-mentioned posters, was to be sent to Inspector-General Smigly-Rydz and Premier Skladkowski. At the close of the meeting the band played the national anthem, and during the subsequent procession to Belvedere Castle, the "Internationale" was sung repeatedly.

The speaker for the Marine and Colonial League demanded that, in the event of a revision of the Danzig Statutes, the Polish rights in Danzig be greatly extended. Loudest applause went to the Socialist speaker, who discoursed on the threat of a Hitler Government at the mouth of the Vistula, receiving its orders from the Third Reich. The anti-German speech of this Socialist was accompanied by cries of: "Down with President Greiser, Fascism, and Hitlerism." The speaker for the "Society of the Defenders of the Fatherland" took up a belligerent tone and concluded with the words: "When the Inspector-General gives the order, Poland will march as one man."

The banners carried in the procession ran thus: "Danzig was Polish and will be Polish again," "Danzig owes its prosperity to Poland," "Danzig belongs to the Vistula," etc. A few banners bore inscriptions like "Germany, hands off Danzig!"

Both the speakers and the press have announced that demonstrations similar to the one in Warsaw today are to be held throughout the country on the 19th inst. They will be organized by the Marine and Colonial League everywhere.

von Moltke

No. 188 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, August 4, 1936

The Senate of the Free City of Danzig lodged a protest with the Polish diplomatic representative on last March 27. Danzig protested against Poland's having concluded various international agreements and treaties without first informing the Senate thereof through her diplomatic representatives, as Poland is bound to do by Article 6 of the Treaty of Paris of November 9, 1920. In some instances information of this kind was presented to the Senate too late for the formulation of Danzig's official position on the matter. Poland has not replied to Danzig's note of protest.

For the Consul-General

Eckner

No. 189 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, November 4, 1936

According to information received from the Senate, 7 uniformed Polish customs officials have been on duty on the Danzig frontier near Einlage (10 km. from Elbing) for some time now; apparently, however, they wear the uniforms not of customs officials but of frontier guards. Residents of German extraction there regard this Polish measure as a provocation, and are naturally quite agitated about it. The Senate has requested the Polish Diplomatic Representative here to have these officials recalled. The Polish Diplomatic Representative has rejected Danzig's request.

von Radowitz

No. 190 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, November 11, 1936

The Polish colony in Danzig organized a celebration on the 10th inst. in commemoration of the 18th anniversary of Poland's existence. As already announced by a wireless telegram from the Danzig branch of the German News Agency, some participants in this celebration were guilty of grave insults to the symbols and emblems of the Reich and of the National-Socialist Movement.

The owner of the gymnasium in which the celebration took place had reserved a small room for the police constables who were to watch the festivities, in the interests of public safety, without attracting attention. Four Poles forced their way into this room and, having taken symbols and emblems of the Reich and the National-Socialist Movement from a cupboard, tore several of them up amid roars of laughter.

von Radowitz

No. 191 The Senate of the Free City of Danzig to the Diplomatic Representative of the Polish Republic in Danzig

Aide-Mémoire

(Translation)

Danzig, April 5, 1937

Today the Polish revenue officers at Dirschau stopped certain margarine products, which were being sent to Poland by the Danzig firm of Amada, and demanded excise. The margarine products had been manufactured under the control of the Danzig customs authorities solely from home-produced raw materials, and an excise levy was therefore not justified. This illegal measure may have most serious consequences for Danzig's margarine industry, which is of vital economic importance to the city. The industry may be forced to close down and throw a considerable number of employees out of work. The measure is also likely to disorganize Danzig's fat supply, so that the Senate may eventually have to take immediate steps to settle the matter.

The Senate requests the Diplomatic Representative of Poland to see to it that this measure, which constitutes an inadmissible economic barrier between Danzig and Poland, is cancelled without further delay.

No. 192 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, November 15, 1937

The anniversary of the Polish Declaration of Independence on November 11 gave rise to celebrations last Sunday in villages inhabited by Polish minorities in the Free City of Danzig. Numerous Danzig residents of Polish extraction took part in the festivities.

During one of the celebrations in the village of Gross-Trampken, some statements worthy of note were made in a speech by M. Chodacki, Poland's Diplomatic Representative in Danzig. One of his remarks was: "I remember very well the time when I went into the Great War, hoping for Poland's resurrection. The Poles here in Danzig should likewise live and wait in the hope that very presently they may be living on Polish soil."

von Luckwald

No. 193 The President of the Free City of Danzig to the Diplomatic Representative of the Polish Republic in Danzig

(Translation)

Danzig, August 24, 1938

Your Excellency:

On last Saturday and Sunday, meetings organized by the West Marches Society were held in Pommerellen, principally in Gdynia, Graudenz, Thorn and Dirschau, the character of which fills me with the deepest concern. The attitude displayed in these meetings was so provocative of ill feeling against Danzig, that I find it difficult, Your Excellency, to place further credence in your statement that feeling in Poland is friendly towards Danzig, and that your Government always endeavors to do justice to the interests of Danzig and to avoid any incidents.

Even if I were to base my judgment on Polish press reports alone, and not on facts which were brought to my notice through other channels, the speeches of the participants in the meetings expressed such a deep hatred of the people of Danzig and such an intentionally distorted representation of conditions in Danzig, that the intention to agitate and foster unrest becomes alarmingly plain. All efforts on the part of myself and my Goverment to meet the wishes of the Polish Republic in every respect, and to avoid anything which has the faintest semblance of prejudicing the interests of the Poles in Danzig, will gradually prove unavailing, if malevolence, hatred and calumny are too often evinced by Poland.

These are not merely occasional demonstrations made by irresponsible Polish circles, but public meetings carefully organized by an association which enjoys the full support of the Polish Government. It would have been easy for the Polish Government to have forbidden the holding of these meetings, the character of which must have been known to them.

I cannot refrain from quoting certain remarks from the speeches delivered at the meetings in Pommerellen:—

"It is high time to put an end to the criminal brigandage of the Danzig troops. Danzig must become Polish." "The constant terrorization of Poles and Polish children, as well as Polish railwaymen by armed Danzig troops . . . ." Mention was also made of "Hitleristic acts of violence," of "pelting Polish girls with stones," and of "a bestial attack on a Polish railwayman." They spoke of the "infamous Hitler gang," of the intention to destroy this gang, and of "raging terrorism" and "persecutions."

At all these meetings the audience was worked up to such a pitch that chauvinistic cat-calls repeatedly rang out, such as "Kill the Hitlerites," "Give us rifles," "We want to march on Danzig," "Turn the Germans out of Danzig," etc.

In this atmosphere they passed resolutions bristling with insults against the Free City of Danzig, and mentioning, for instance, "barbarous conditions in Danzig." It was said that Poland should check the brutal obstinacy of Danzig and the brigandage being carried on there against Poland with impunity.

All this took place apparently without any provocation on the part of Danzig, for I cannot seriously believe that the fact that two young men of Danzig, professedly Poles, had been beaten could really be the cause of this hatred. This leads me, Your Excellency, to speak of your letter of the 16th inst., in which you intercede on behalf of the Mach brothers. The matter is one which has been grossly exaggerated by the aggrieved parties. These German-speaking youths, who grossly insulted the Swastika flag, were thrashed by the indignant crowd. This incident, however regrettable, is comprehensible, when one considers that the population has over and over again had to witness pro-Polish citizens of Danzig treat provocatively and scornfully symbols which the majority of Danzig's people love and cherish.

May I call your attention to the fact that children of Danzig citizens are very frequently beaten up in Poland, without an immediate complaint on the part of the Danzig Government. I should also like to point out that peaceful Danzig citizens, who have conducted business in Graudenz and Thorn for many years, have received leaflets worded as follows:—

"The Hand of Justice.

"In the name of the great and just Polish cause I command you, and your whole family, as citizens of Danzig, to leave the city of Graudenz and the territory of the Polish Republic immediately.

"We give you a period of three days in which to settle your private affairs. We warn you that if you fail to leave Poland voluntarily within the given time, we shall adopt every conceivable measure against you, and likewise against your family, and we shall even go so far as to expel you from Poland by force.

"The Hand of Justice."

Furthermore, the children of these Danzig citizens are afraid to go to school in the morning, because they have to fear being thrashed by Polish nationals.

I quote the above in order to show that, despite the limited number of Danzig subjects residing in Poland, there is nevertheless ample cause for the Danzig Senate to complain of the actions of irresponsible persons in Poland.

I deeply regret, however, to be forced to state that associations such as the West Marches Society, and newspapers such as the *Kurjer Baltycki*, which are in close touch with the Government, so greatly misrepresent every incident in any way connected with Danzig, that one is driven to recognize the fomenting of hatred as their sole purpose. When a

Polish railwayman's accidental death is misrepresented* as a "murder committed by six Danzig Hitlerites," we are confronted by an intolerable condition, especially since the distorted version finds its way into the foreign press where it caused a similar reaction.

I venture to express the hope, Your Excellency, that you will immediately inform your Government of the effects which the meetings of the West Marches Society and the libellous misrepresentations by the *Kurjer Baltycki* have had in Danzig, and will see to it that everything possible is done to control this irresponsible agitation so greatly endangering peace.

I am, etc.

Greiser

No. 194 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, November 14, 1938

As in previous years, a number of celebrations took place in Danzig on November 11, in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the rebirth of Poland's independence.

The climax of these celebrations was reached at a gathering in the *Sporthalle* on the evening of November 12, which Minister Chodacki himself attended. M. Walewski of Warsaw, a member of the Polish Sejm, delivered the speech of the day, in which he made significant allusions to Danzig. When he spoke of the liberation of his compatriots in the Olsa district, he declared that the Poles here in Danzig would live to see the same thing happen to them, and that Poland's aim was to extend her boundaries to include the same area which she used to have in the days of King Boleslaw Chobry. At an "Independence Anniversary Festival" organized by the Polish minority in Zoppot on the 13th inst., and attended by a member of the Polish Diplomatic Agency in Danzig, the chief speaker, Professor Pilecki, Vice-Marshall of the *Gmina Polska-Zwiazek Polakow* Association and a retired Major, touched on the Danzig question. He referred to the suffering caused the Polish minority by supposed chicanery, and made disparaging remarks about the spirit of the S. A. and S. S. It was his contention that numerous Poles had had to join the ranks of the S. A. and S. S. out of necessity. He impressed upon his hearers that they must look forward to the day when all the Poles would again be re-united. Poles in Danzig should

* On the night of August 17, a Polish railwayman of the name of Winnicki, was accidentally killed on the Danzig-Gdynia line. This accident formed a pretext for casting unfounded suspicion on Danzig railwaymen, and the incident was utilized as the focal point of a propaganda campaign against Danzig. Cf. No. 155.

bear on high the standard of the fatherland, so that they too might win the liberty won by their brothers in Olsa.

von Janson

No. 195 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, February 23, 1939

A short time ago, a number of Polish newspapers published indignant reports of incidents which had occurred in the Café Langfuhr at Danzig-Langfuhr, a place which is much frequented by Polish students.

According to reports I have received from Danzig, German and Polish students from the Danzig Technical College had already come to blows in the Café Langfuhr on January 29. As further incidents were to be feared, the proprietor of the café addressed a letter to the Polish Students Association, *Bratnia Pomoc*, on the 10th inst., in which he asked Polish students not to visit his establishment in the future. The letter in question was ignored by the Poles. When Polish students again visited Café Langfuhr a few days later, they apparently discovered a placard inside the café with the following words written on it: "No Admittance to Dogs and Poles." According to the Polish version, this placard had been put up by German students. Investigations made by the police have not borne out this charge. On the contrary, strong suspicion exists that it was actually a Polish student who hung up the notice in the café.

The Polish students association, *Bratnia Pomoc*, used these incidents as a pretext for arranging a protest meeting of Polish students from Danzig Technical College on the 16th inst. A resolution was passed at this meeting, stating that *Bratnia Pomoc* considered it the natural rôle of the Danzig district to serve the mother country, the Polish Republic, and keep in close touch with her. The Polish nation alone had the right to control the Vistula estuary. Further, immediate satisfaction was demanded in a sharp tone, and the Polish Government were requested to take effective counter-measures on the principle of "a tooth for a tooth."

According to supplementary confidential information which I have received, police investigations have revealed the significant fact that the Polish Captain Krukierek was present at the above-mentioned meeting; he is attached to the military department of the Polish Diplomatic Agency in Danzig, and therefore enjoys diplomatic privileges.

Consequently, one cannot refrain from suspecting that the Polish Diplomatic Agency here is closely connected with the provocative conduct of the Polish students.*

von Jansen

* Further Cf. No. 152.

No. 196 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, March 16, 1939

After numerous discussions and negotiations which have been carried on meanwhile, a final settlement of the conflict between German and Polish students at Danzig Technical College seems to be materializing at last. The result of the negotiations has been laid down in the draft of a protocol which was initialed last night. The final signing of the protocol has not yet taken place.

At a gathering after the initiating of the protocol, the Polish Legation advisors who had sat on the committee made certain remarks to Councillor Siegmund, which are not without interest. The two Polish gentlemen declared that Warsaw had regarded this clash between the students with the utmost seriousness; according to the opinion held in authoritative Polish circles, one more spark would have set off military action against Danzig, and brought Germany and Poland into conflict with each other.

This statement is in remarkable contrast to M. Beck's recent reassuring declarations. It seems to me to be influenced by the rather nervous attitude of Minister Chodacki who, during his conversation with President Greiser, repeated what he has said on previous occasions, namely, that he was considering whether he ought not to resign his office.

von Janson

No. 197 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with the Polish Ambassador at Berchtesgaden, October 24, 1938

(Translation)

Memorandum of Herr Hewel, Legation Councillor

At the beginning of the conversation the German Foreign Minister described the immediate situation to the Polish Ambassador.

M. Lipski then explained the reason for his visit:—Poland was interested in the stabilization of the Danube Basin. The Carpatho-Ukraine, with its disorder, its 80% illiterate population was the well-spring of every conceivable sort of political current, a downright hot-bed of Communism. It had 650,000 inhabitants in all, of whom about 250,000 were Hungarians and Jews, and 400,000 Ruthenians. Poland had already exchanged numerous acrimonious notes with Prague about this centre of unrest. M. Beck had said he wanted some sensible result to emerge from this crisis. Poland's wish was that this territory should be linked to Hungary.

For the rest, a common Polish-Hungarian frontier was of great value to shut off the east. The rumors that a block was being formed against Germany, were nonsense; they had been completely refuted by the attitude of Poland toward Soviet Russia during the crisis. Polish policy had aimed at inducing the Hungarian Government to be moderate in the Slovakian question, and to take the offensive in the matter of the Carpatho-Ukraine. He, Lipski, hoped that a solution along these lines would not run counter to German interests.

The German Foreign Minister explained to the Ambassador that these ideas were somewhat novel to him, and that he would think them over at his leisure. He could understand Poland's wishes, but he also saw certain difficulties which we would have to take into consideration.

The German Foreign Minister then raised the great general problem, which had led him to ask M. Lipski to come to Berchtesgaden, and which he wished to broach quite confidentially, as among M. Lipski, M. Beck and himself. He asked the Ambassador to report the discussion to M. Beck by word of mouth; otherwise there would be too much danger of things leaking out, especially to the press. The Ambassador agreed to do so. To these introductory remarks, the Foreign Minister added an invitation to M. Beck to pay him a visit some time in the course

of the following month. Germany, he said, herewith extended a standing invitation to her Polish friends. The Ambassador expressed his gratification and undertook to inform M. Beck.

The Foreign Minister then went on to say that he thought it was time to make a clean sweep of all existing sources of friction between Germany and Poland. This would crown the work inaugurated by Marshal Pilsudski and the Fuehrer. By the way of comparison he instanced our relations with Italy, in which the Fuehrer, with deep insight, had renounced all claims to South Tyrol for the sake of a general settlement. Such an agreement was worth attempting in the case of Poland, too, and would be in her interest; and it accorded with the Fuehrer's policy, which was directed towards the clarification of relations with all neighbors. It was conceivable that with France, too, clearer agreements would be reached some day, going beyond the Fuehrer's declaration concerning the frontier. In Poland's case the first thing was to discuss Danzig, by way of a partial solution leading toward a general adjustment of the relations between the two nations. Danzig was German—it always had been German, and it would always remain German. He, the German Foreign Minister, was thinking of a solution that would, broadly speaking, be as follows:—

1. The Free State of Danzig to return to the German Reich.
2. An extra-territorial motor-road belonging to Germany to be built across the Corridor, and likewise an extra-territorial railway with several tracks.
3. Poland similarly to obtain an extra-territorial road or motor-road, a railway, and a free port in the territory of Danzig.
4. Poland to be guaranteed a market for her goods in Danzig territory.
5. The two nations to recognize (and guarantee) their common frontiers or their respective territories.
6. The German-Polish Treaty to be prolonged by ten to twenty-five years.
7. The two countries to add to their treaty a clause providing for consultation.

The Polish Ambassador took cognizance of this suggestion. Although naturally he would first have to speak to M. Beck, he would like to remark at once that it was a mistake to regard Danzig as a product of Versailles, such as, for instance, the Saar Territory. One must follow the growth of Danzig historically and geographically to get a correct angle on the problem.

The Foreign Minister replied that he did not desire an immediate answer. The Ambassador was to think it all over and to speak to M. Beck as soon as possible. After all, there must be a certain give and take in these considerations. For reasons of internal policy a final recognition of the Corridor was no easy matter for the Fuehrer, either. One must think in terms of centuries in this case—Danzig, after all, was German, and would always remain so.

M. Lipski promised to go into all this very thoroughly with M. Beck. He would go to Warsaw about Thursday and could be back at the beginning of the following week. His chief request was for an exchange of ideas about the Hungarian question. M. Beck had instructed him to say that Poland was ready to participate, in case Hungary's wish for arbitration by the three countries, Germany, Italy, and Poland, should be favorably received by the first two countries.

In reply the Foreign Minister pointed to the risks involved in an arbitration award.

In a second short conversation the Foreign Minister mentioned the Carpatho-Ukraine. The Ambassador emphasized the fact that Poland had no interest in extending her frontiers in that quarter. Poland's sole wish was to receive a joint frontier with Hungary.

The Foreign Minister promised to think over the whole complex of problems again, and in this connection expressed the opinion that if an all-round solution could be reached between Germany and Poland, a happy arrangement could certainly be found to solve this problem, too.

The tone of the conversation was very friendly throughout.

Hewel

No. 198 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with the Polish Ambassador, November 19, 1938

Memorandum

(Translation)

At 1 p. m. today I received M. Lipski, the Polish Ambassador.

M. Lipski explained to me that he had informed Foreign Minister Beck about the substance of our discussion of October 24 at Berchtesgaden, and that he was now in a position to tell me what M. Beck thought about these matters. M. Lipski then read parts of his instructions aloud from a slip of paper.

1. The Polish Foreign Minister was of opinion that, in general, German-Polish relations had stood the test. During the Czech crisis it had become apparent that the German-Polish Agreement had been con-

structed on a durable foundation. M. Beck considered that Poland's straightforward policy had been useful to Germany when the latter won possession of the Sudeten Territory, and had contributed materially toward a solution of this question in accordance with German views. During these critical days the Polish Government had turned a deaf ear to all siren songs emanating from certain quarters.

I answered M. Lipski that in my opinion, too, the German-Polish Agreement had shown itself capable of withstanding considerable strain. The Fuehrer's action against Czechoslovakia had enabled Poland to gain possession of the Olsa territory, and to satisfy a number of other wishes with regard to frontiers. For the rest I agreed with him that the Polish attitude had made things easier for Germany.

2. M. Lipski then made a lengthy speech to prove the importance and value which Danzig, as a Free City, had for Poland.

For reasons of internal policy, too, it was difficult for the Polish Foreign Minister to assent to the incorporation of Danzig in the Reich. M. Beck had been revolving the question in his mind how one might eliminate, once and for all, any causes of friction which might possibly arise between Germany and Poland over the Danzig problem. His idea was that the League of Nations' Danzig Statute might be replaced by a German-Polish treaty dealing with all Danzig questions. This treaty might be based on the recognition of Danzig as a purely German city with all rights accruing to her from this status; on the other hand Poland and the Polish minority should likewise have all economic rights assured to them. In this arrangement the character of Danzig as a Free State and the customs union with Poland would be preserved.

I answered M. Lipski that I deplored M. Beck's attitude. The suggestion for a permanent solution of the German-Polish problem, by which Danzig would fall to Germany, might increase M. Beck's burden in home politics, but on the other hand it would obviously be no easy matter for the Fuehrer either, to tell the German people that he was guaranteeing the Polish Corridor. The purpose underlying my suggestion was to establish German-Polish relations on a foundation as lasting as solid rock, and to do away with all possible points of friction. It had not been my intention to have a diplomatic chat. As he, M. Lipski, could perceive from the Fuehrer's speeches, the latter had always taken a long view in dealing with the German-Polish question. In his presence, at a recent meeting of international press representatives, I had made it clear that good German-Polish relations were essential to German policy.

Ambassador Lipski thanked me for these remarks, and then returned to the proposal of a bilateral treaty about Danzig. I explained to him that I could not give a final decision on this, but to me the proposal did not seem very practicable.

3. I then asked M. Lipski what M. Beck thought about the question of an extra-territorial motor-road, and of a likewise extra-territorial double-track railway through the Polish Corridor.

M. Lipski answered that he was not in a position to go into the matter or make any official pronouncement. Speaking purely for himself, he would say that such a wish on the part of Germany might conceivably not fall on barren ground in Poland, and that possibly opportunities for solution might lie in this direction.

4. I then spoke to M. Lipski about the Polish postage stamps just issued, which were intended for Danzig use, and which represented Danzig as if it were a Polish city. Here, again, he could understand that this must hurt the feelings of the German population of Danzig.

M. Lipski declared that he was not well informed about the matter, but would make enquiries.

In conclusion I told M. Lipski it would be well worth while to give serious consideration to German proposals dealing with the whole complex of German-Polish relations. He could see that we were trying to accomplish something permanent, and to bring about a really stable condition. Naturally, that could not be done in a day. If M. Beck would give our proposals his best thought, he might see his way to adopting a positive attitude.

von Ribbentrop

No. 199 Memorandum of the German Ambassador in Warsaw

(Translation)

Berlin, December 15, 1938

Foreign Minister Beck asked me to pay him a visit yesterday evening. I had previously informed him that I should be in Berlin today. M. Beck began by discussing at some length the great importance of the Agreement of January 1934, and declared that he was as ready now as always to continue the policy inaugurated by Marshal Pilsudski. The Agreement of 1934 had played an especially important part in the extremely critical time we had just gone through, and had once more proved its worth beyond all dispute. Hence it really was absurd that at this juncture a certain tension should have arisen in German-Polish relations. The reason probably was that too many changes had taken place all at once in the last few weeks. Not only had Czechoslovakia taken on an entirely new character, but a whole series of systems and combinations, which had formerly played quite a rôle, had suddenly collapsed. For this reason he thought it expedient that a meeting should take place to discuss the new state of affairs, and he had charged M. Lipski to convey the suggestion of a personal talk between the two Foreign ministers.

From M. Lipski, who was in Warsaw yesterday, and whom I met in the train, I learned that it was planned to have this talk in Warsaw,

and that it was hoped that Herr von Ribbentrop would take the earliest opportunity to return the visit paid by M. Beck to Berlin three years before.

M. Beck then proceeded to speak about individual problems which required more detailed discussion. First he mentioned Danzig, where some new difficulties had recently arisen, and where there was always a possibility of unpleasant surprises. He earnestly hoped that unwelcome *faits accomplis* would be avoided. In a conversation that had taken place a little while ago, the problem of Danzig had been broached (he was evidently alluding to the Berchtesgaden discussion*), and some time or other, no doubt, the discussions would have to be resumed.

M. Beck went on to mention the Carpatho-Ukrainian question, which had rather excited public opinion. The Polish public was afraid that Germany intended to use the Carpatho-Ukraine as the spring-board for an anti-Polish policy, while in Germany Poland was suspected of wishing to bar German access to the Danubian region. He assured me that the latter view was absolutely false, and hoped that the former was likewise incorrect. But, in any case, he thought it would be a good thing to talk over these matters. He believed that it would be possible to find a solution compatible with the interests of both States.

We then began to discuss Memel, and I took the opportunity to call his attention to utterances in the Polish press to the effect that important political changes might be expected in the Memel territory as a result of the elections. M. Beck contented himself with pointing out that Poland had economic and shipping interests in the Memel region, and that in any case he felt he could expect due consideration of these interests.

I referred to the fact that not only had I noticed a growth in ill feeling in Poland towards Germany, but that the attitude in Germany towards Poland was not friendly either. I attributed this in the first place to the treatment of the minority, especially in the Olsa territory, where workmen had been dismissed wholesale, and where the population had gradually come to the conclusion that the twenty years of Czech rule had been a Paradise compared with the present conditions.** M. Beck declared that the Polish Government were desirous of securing good living conditions for the German minority, that the Premier had already issued peremptory instructions to the administrative authorities, and that if he (Beck) were informed of specific instances, he would be ready to intervene personally at any time.

von Moltke

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* Cf. No. 197.
** Cf. Section VII.

No. 200 Conversation of the Fuehrer with M. Beck, Polish Foreign Minister—in the Presence of the German Foreign Minister, the German Ambassador in Warsaw, and the Polish Ambassador in Berlin—Berchtesgaden, January 5, 1939

Memorandum of Dr. Schmidt, Minister Plenipotentiary

(Translation)

In opening his remarks, M. Beck stressed the fact that the September crisis of German-Polish relations had stood the test without a sign of strain. It might be that the high level of the relations last September had shown some falling off in the last few months, but, in the opinion of the Polish Government, both parties should exert themselves to remove the causes of certain difficulties which had arisen in the immediate past. M. Beck mentioned the Danzig question as one of the difficulties; he emphasized the fact that, in this case, not only the German and the Polish Governments were concerned, but also third parties, among others the League of Nations. What would be the proper course, for instance, if the League of Nations were to give up its rôle in Danzig? There were several other questions in which existing misunderstandings ought to be eliminated. One of these was the guarantee of the Czechoslovakian frontier: Should it be taken in hand immediately? Or, if at all, for what time was it contemplated? Poland was especially interested in the Carpatho-Ukrainian question. He would remind them of Marshal Pilsudski's words about the "Balkanizing of Central Europe." In the agitators now active in the Carpatho-Ukrainian region, Poland recognized old enemies in a new guise. She feared that the Carpatho-Ukraine might one day grow into such a centre of unrest for Poland that the Polish Government might find themselves called upon to intervene. This might result in further complications. That had been the chief reason for Poland's efforts to attain a joint frontier with Hungary.

The Fuehrer replied that a settlement of all existing difficulties could be obtained only by a return to the fundamental spirit of German-Polish relations. As for Germany, he could say emphatically that her relations to Poland were embodied in the Non-Aggression Pact of 1934, and had not changed in the slightest since then. In the question of the Carpatho-Ukraine particularly, Germany had no interests on the other side of the Carpathians, and was indifferent as to what interested countries did there. The attitude adopted by Germany on the Ukrainian question in the Vienna Arbitration—an attitude which had perhaps led to certain misunderstandings—was explicable in terms of the historical development of the question. This arbitration award had been put into execution on the basis of the Hungarian demands after both parties had been heard.

His (the Fuehrer's) desire to avoid anything which might precipitate an international conflict was the determining factor in his attitude on the Ukrainian question. Poland need have no fear that Germany had any such motives as were attributed to her in the international press.

With respect to the details of German-Polish relations, he wished once more to repeat that there had been no change in the German attitude towards Poland since 1934. To attain a final adjustment of the questions still pending between the two countries, one should not confine oneself to the rather negative Agreement of 1934, but should seek to formulate a treaty which would cover these single problems and dispose of them. For Germany there was not only the Memel question, which would be settled in a manner consonant with German views (for it looked as if the Lithuanians would be willing to co-operate in finding a sensible solution), but there was also the problem of Danzig and the Corridor, a problem that directly affected German-Polish relations. The fact that Germany felt so keenly on this matter made it extremely difficult to find a solution. In his opinion it was necessary to get out of the old grooves, and to seek a solution on completely novel lines. In the case of Danzig, for instance, one could imagine an arrangement by which, in conformity with the will of its inhabitants, the city should be reincorporated into the German body politic, but by which, as a matter of course, Polish interests would be safeguarded in every respect, particularly in the economic sphere. That indeed was in the interests of Danzig, for economically Danzig could not exist without a hinterland: therefore, the Fuehrer had in mind a formula by which Danzig would return to Germany politically, but would remain with Poland economically.

Danzig was German, would always remain German, and sooner or later would return to Germany.

As for the Corridor, which, as already mentioned, presented a grave psychological problem for Germany, the Fuehrer pointed out that the connection with East Prussia was as vital a matter for the Reich as the connection with the sea was for Poland. Here too it might be possible to find, by the use of quite novel methods, a solution that would pay due regard to the interests of both.

If means could be found to bring about a final settlement of all separate questions on such a common sense footing, whereby each partner, of course, would have to be given his full rights, then that would be the time to supplement the rather negative Declaration of 1934 by a somewhat more positive arrangement with Poland, somewhat like the agreements with France; Germany would give Poland a definite guarantee of her frontiers on a treaty basis. Poland would then have the great advantage of getting her German frontiers, including the boundaries of the Corridor, assured by treaty. The Fuehrer, in saying this, stressed once more the psychological difficulty of the Corridor

problem, and the fact that only he was in a position to engineer such a solution. It was not entirely a simple matter for him to guarantee the Corridor in this way, and he would certainly meet with considerable criticism in consequence, especially from the bourgeoisie. But as a practical politician, he nevertheless believed that such a solution would be best. Once Germany had given her guarantee, one would hear as little about the Polish Corridor as one now heard about the South Tyrol or Alsace-Lorraine.

The Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs thanked the Fuehrer for his exposition of the German standpoint, and declared that Poland, too, would abide absolutely by the attitude she had maintained towards Germany till then.

Poland would continue the line of independent policy she had pursued in former years, when an attempt was made to link Poland more closely with Russia by means of an Eastern Pact. Poland, however, was not as nervous as France about increasing her security, and she placed no trust in so-called "security systems". Their final failure after the September crisis marked a turning-point in history. But Poland could thoroughly appreciate the German point of view as expressed once more in the declaration just made by the Fuehrer. For her part she would hold fast to the old policy towards Germany.

As to German-Polish relations, he took cognizance of the wishes uttered by the Fuehrer. Nevertheless the Danzig question appeared to him extraordinarily difficult. In this connection one had to take public opinion in Poland into special account. By this he did not mean the attitude of "the coffee-house opposition." During his seven years in office he had never paid the least attention to coffee-house opinion, and he was still in office. But he had to consider the real opinion of the nation, and this did seem to present difficulties for a solution of the Danzig question. Nevertheless, he was quite ready to think the matter over.

Colonel Beck did not enter into the other German-Polish questions broached by the Fuehrer, but concluded his remarks with a renewed confirmation of his statement that Poland's general attitude would remain true as ever to the line followed since 1934.

Schmidt

No. 201 Conversation Between the German Foreign Minister and M. Beck, Polish Foreign Minister, Munich, January 6, 1939

Memorandum

(Translation)

Berlin, January 9, 1939

At the beginning of a conversation lasting about an hour and a half M. Beck immediately broached the Danzig problem. He said that Poland

too, was endeavoring to continue neighborly relations with Germany, and to strengthen them. The only problem which might shortly prove a disturbing factor here was the Danzig question. He saw two possible circumstances that might force us to a definite stand on the subject:

1. That the League of Nations would cease to interest itself in the Danzig question and would recall the High Commissioner, in which case Germany and Poland would have to settle the question between themselves.

2. That the Poles would be compelled to take up the matter owing to new developments in Danzig.

He added that the problem was a very difficult one indeed, and that he had cudgelled his brains for a solution, but without result so far.

Finally, M. Beck pointed out once more that, in the minds of the entire Polish people, Danzig was the touchstone of German-Polish relations, and that it would take a good deal to alter that idea.

In reply I made the following explanations to M. Beck:

1. As the Fuehrer had already said, Germany's prime and unqualified desire was for a final, comprehensive and generous consolidation of our mutual relations.

2. Two problems seemed to have important bearing on this point:

(a) Direct German-Polish relations. In this connection I would suggest the following solution:—

Reunion of Danzig with Germany. In return for this, all Polish economic interests in this territory to be guaranteed in the most generous manner. Connection between Germany and her province of East Prussia by means of an extra-territorial motor-road and railway. Germany, for her part, to guarantee the Corridor and all Poland's present possessions, i. e., to give final and permanent recognition of the common frontiers.

(b) The Czecho-Carpatho-Ukrainian question.

In this connection I repeated that ethnographic frontiers had been fixed at Munich. Should the principle of political frontiers be brought up by any one, of course, Germany could not remain disinterested. Although German political interests did not, in themselves, extend beyond the Carpathians, Germany considered it impossible to declare her disinterestedness in any alteration of frontiers, even beyond that carried out in regard to Czechoslovakia and Carpatho-Ukraine, because such events might easily involve her in a conflict. The decision arrived at by the arbiters in Vienna must be observed, and it was our fundamental conception that, if any other wishes came up for consideration here, they would have to be brought into accord with German interests.

At the close of the conversation I complained to M. Beck about the treatment of our German minorities, especially in the Olsa territory, and took occasion to object most emphatically to M. Grazynski's continued anti-German intrigues. M. Beck assured me that this question had already received serious attention and that he, for his part, would do his utmost to bring about a more satisfactory state of affairs.

I then thanked M. Beck for his invitation to Warsaw, and accepted it on principle. The date has not yet been fixed. It was agreed that M. Beck and I should once more turn over in our minds the whole matter of a treaty settlement between Germany and Poland. Lipski and Moltke could then carry on negotiations during the next few weeks, and my visit should certainly take place this winter.

von Ribbentrop

No. 202 Conversations Between the German Foreign Minister and the Polish Foreign Minister, Warsaw, January 26, 1939

Memorandum

(Translation)

Berlin, February 1, 1939

1. In my conversation with M. Beck, which was a continuation of our conversation* at Munich on January 6, I reverted to the old subject of the German proposal concerning the reunion of Danzig with the Reich in return for a guarantee of Poland's economic interests there, and the building of an extra-territorial motor-road and railway connection between Germany and her province of East Prussia, for which Germany would make compensation by guaranteeing the German-Polish frontier. In this connection I stated again that it was the wish of the Fuehrer to achieve a complete adjustment of German-Polish relations by means of pertinent treaties. It was important that M. Beck should realize that the German wishes were extraordinarily moderate, since, even today, the allocation of exceedingly valuable sections of severed German territory to Poland, in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles, is regarded by every German as a great injustice, which only Germany's extreme impotence made possible at the time. Ninety-nine out of a hundred Englishmen or Frenchmen would say at once, if asked, that at least the return of Danzig and of the Corridor, was a natural demand on the part of Germany.

M. Beck seemed impressed by what I had said, but again pointed out that internal opposition was to be expected. Nevertheless, he would carefully consider our suggestion.

* Cf. No. 201.

I have come to an agreement with M. Beck that, should the League of Nations withdraw from Danzig before we had concluded a comprehensive treaty with Poland whereby the Danzig affair was covered, we would get in touch with him, in order to find a solution for this contingency.

2. I complained again to M. Beck about the treatment of our German minority, and arranged with him that the discussions which had long been planned, between the leading officials of the respective Ministries for Home Affairs, should be begun immediately.

von Ribbentrop

No. 203 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister With the Polish Ambassador, March 21, 1939

Memorandum

(Translation)

I requested M. Lipski, the Polish Ambassador, to come to see me at noon today. I described to him the development of the Czechoslovakian question, and declared that, in view of the precipitate nature of the events, it had not been possible for me to keep the foreign representatives here as well informed as I should have wished. I had, however, fully informed Ambassador von Moltke, who happened to be in Berlin, and instructed him to enlighten M. Beck, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs. I then described in detail the events which had induced the Fuehrer to intervene.

It had, I said, attracted our notice that the Bénes spirit was astir again in what remained of Czechoslovakia. All the Fuehrer's warnings to M. Chvalkovsky had gone unheeded. The Prague Government had recently tried to take dictatorial action in Carpatho-Ukraine and Slovakia. Moreover, the oppression of Germans in the linguistic enclaves had begun again.

I presumed that the settlement of the Carpatho-Ukrainian question, which had meantime been reached, had caused great satisfaction in Poland. The establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia meant the final pacification of this area in conformity with historical principles, and would eventually prove of benefit to all.

Ambassador Lipski then expressed anxiety with regard to Germany's having taken over the protection of Slovakia. This news had created a strong impression in Poland, for the man in the street could not help regarding such a step as one directed primarily against Poland. The Slovaks, he said, were a people linguistically related to the Poles. Polish interests in that area were also historically justified, and, from a purely realistic political point of view, it had to be admitted that the proclamation of the Protectorate could be regarded only as a blow at Poland.

I drew Ambassador Lipski's attention to the fact that the independent Slovak Government had appealed to Germany for protection. The proclamation of the Protectorate was certainly not directed against Poland. I gave him to understand clearly that the question might be discussed jointly if German-Polish relations in general were to develop satisfactorily; in that event, a Polish participation in the guarantee of the Slovak State might be considered. I said that I had unfortunately been compelled to recognize that a certain constraint had gradually manifested itself in German-Polish relations. This development had begun several months ago. Surprise had been felt in Germany at the peculiar attitude displayed by Poland in the Minorities Commission.* The Danzig incidents** provoked by Polish students had likewise given us food for thought. Ambassador Lipski denied emphatically that that sort of incident had been caused by Polish students. He likewise denied most vigorously my observation that, in the Fuehrer's opinion, the posters which had led to the incidents had been put up by Polish students, and maintained that Polish students had not participated in the affair in any way.

I further drew the Polish Ambassador's attention to the continuous press attacks, to the anti-German demonstrations on the occasion of Count Ciano's visit,*** and to the open press feud now being carried on. This press campaign seemed to me entirely unjustified. I said that the Fuehrer had always worked for mutual accord and understanding with Poland. The Fuehrer was still pursuing this aim, but was increasingly surprised at the Polish attitude. Up to now I had imposed a certain restraint upon the German press with regard to Poland, as the Polish Ambassador could see for himself by glancing at the German newspapers. In the long run, however, it would be impossible for me to allow such attacks to go unanswered. The probable result of such a reciprocal press campaign would be that our relations would reach the zero point. I stated that it seemed necessary to me to make a fresh attempt to put German-Polish policy on the right track, and that it appeared to me right and proper that a personal discussion between German and Polish statesmen should take place at an early date.

I added that I should be glad if Foreign Minister Beck would visit Berlin in the near future. The Fuehrer had told me that he too would warmly welcome such a discussion. Concerning the possible subject of such an exchange of views, I declared to M. Lipski that he had to admit that Germany was not without a share in the creation and present existence of Poland, and that Poland owed her present territorial expanse to Germany's greatest misfortune: namely, the fact that Germany had lost the World War.

The decision regarding the Corridor, I said, was generally accepted as being the heaviest burden placed on Germany by the Peace Treaty of Versailles. No former government could have dared to renounce German

* Cf. No. 178.
** Cf. No. 195.
*** Cf. Nos. 146 and 147.

claims to revision without finding themselves swept away by the Reichstag within the space of forty-eight hours. The Fuehrer thought otherwise with regard to the Corridor problem. He recognized the justice of the Polish demand for free access to the sea. He was the only German statesman who could venture to renounce possession of the Corridor once and for all. The prerequisite was, however, that the purely German city of Danzig should return to the Reich, and that an extra-territorial motor-road and railway connection be established between the Reich and East Prussia. The existence of the Corridor was a thorn in the flesh of the German people, of which the sting could only be removed in this way. If the Polish statesmen were to take the real facts into account calmly, a solution could be found on the following basis:— the return of Danzig, to the Reich, an extra-territorial motor-road and railway connection between the Reich and East Prussia, and, in return, a guarantee of the Corridor. I could well imagine that, in such a case, the Slovakian question might be dealt with in the aforementioned manner.

Ambassador Lipski promised to inform M. Beck accordingly, and then to give me an answer.

I suggested that Ambassador Lipski go to Warsaw to report in person. I repeated once more how advantageous a final settlement between Germany and Poland appeared to me, particularly at the present juncture. This was also important because up to now the Fuehrer could not but be astonished at the peculiar attitude adopted by Poland on a number of questions. It was important that he should not gain the impression that Poland simply did not want to reach a settlement.

von Ribbentrop

No. 204 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)
Warsaw, March 24, 1939

Definitely confirmed that three or four classes of reservists, i. e., 1911-1914, also 1906 and 1907 were called up on short notice from different districts. Reserve officers of technical troops called up.

Moltke

No. 205 The German Consul at Gdynia to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)
Gdynia, March 24, 1939

Three classes were called up at Gdynia yesterday in the morning and afternoon. The Poles were called straight from their places of employ-

ment. Among them were a large number of men who had returned from manoeuvres only a fortnight ago. It is said that classes 1910—1912 have been called up and, according to other reports classes 1912—1914. I was unable to obtain any definite information on the subject.

With the exception of one ship, the Polish Navy put to sea yesterday. Warships held target practice near Rewa the day before yesterday.

I further learned that four companies from Gdynia were billeted on the population of Putziger-Heisternest (Jastarnia) on the Hela peninsula, and are standing by for any emergency. These troops are said to have been there since Saturday. The soldiers, fully equipped for active service, left Gdynia by rail without having been informed as to their destination.

Hofmann

No. 206 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, March 24, 1939

The calling up of reserves* already reported points to the growing influence of military circles upon the conduct of Polish foreign policy. For the time being, the Foreign Minister is still in a strong position, as is evident from the arrest of Mackiewicz, a prominent editor, who, although an adherent of Pilsudski's, has become a bitter opponent of M. Beck. It is to be feared, however, that M. Beck will adopt a more extreme course if the threatening wave of Nationalist feeling compels him to do so.

As to British suggestions,** which have motivated the British Ambassador's repeated calls at the Foreign Ministry during the past few days, nothing definite has so far become known. Therefore it is impossible to say whether Polish mobilization measures were influenced by this British action, or not. A remark made by M. Arcizewiski, Under-Secretary of State, to some diplomats here, seems worth repeating in this connection. Amid various deprecatory remarks about Britain and France, who without running any risks themselves, had attempted time and again to utilize Poland for ends other than her own, he declared that Poland would never fight merely for the interests of other Powers. In other respects, too, it may be inferred from the general lines of M. Beck's policy that Poland would only reluctantly join any general combination, or allow herself to be involved in actions which would compel her to define her position prematurely and openly. This does not mean, of course, that

* Cf. No. 204.
** Cf. No. 271 ff.

Poland would not accept British proposals if, as a result of the present negotiations, she saw a possibility of obtaining firm promises from Great Britain, which would augment her security.

Moltke

No. 207 Memorandum of the Director of the Political Department at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, March 25, 1939

The High Command of the Army called me by telephone at 11 a. m. today and gave me the following information regarding Polish mobilization measures:

1. About 4,000 Polish troops have been concentrated near Gdynia.
2. The force of a garrison hitherto stationed in the southern part of the Corridor have been transferred to the immediate vicinity of the Danzig frontier.
3. Poland has mobilized three classes.

All these measures are reported to apply to the northern part of Poland only; in other parts of the country the extent of military measures taken was not yet clearly determinable.

Fürst von Bismarck

No. 208 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister With the Polish Ambassador, March 26, 1939

Memorandum

(Translation)

I received M. Lipski, the Polish Ambassador, at 12:30 p. m. today.

Ambassador Lipski handed me the Polish Government's memorandum here enclosed, which I read in his presence.

Having taken note of its contents I replied to Ambassador Lipski that, in my personal opinion, the Polish attitude could not be considered a suitable basis for a solution of the German-Polish question. The only possible solution of the problem was the reunion of Danzig with the Reich and the construction of an extra-territorial motor-road and railway connection between the Reich and East Prussia. M. Lipski replied that

it was his painful duty to draw attention to the fact that any further pursuance of these German plans, especially where the return of Danzig to the Reich was concerned, meant war with Poland.

I then drew Ambassador Lipski's attention to the reports in hand respecting the concentration of Polish troops, and warned him of the possible consequence. The Polish attitude seemed to me a peculiar reply to my recent offer of a final adjustment of German-Polish relations. If things continued like this a serious situation might soon arise. I was in a position to tell Ambassador Lipski that such action as, for example, a violation of Danzig territory by Polish troops, would be regarded by Germany in the same light as a violation of the frontiers of the Reich.

Ambassador Lipski emphatically denied that Poland had any military designs upon Danzig. The movements of military units carried out by Poland were merely precautionary measures.

I then asked Ambassador Lipski whether the Polish Government would not reconsider the German proposals as soon as the situation had become somewhat calmer, so that a solution might be reached on the basis we proposed, namely the re-union of Danzig with the Reich and an extra-territorial motor-road and railway connection. Ambassador Lipski gave an evasive answer and referred once more to the Memorandum he had handed me.

I replied to Ambassador Lipski that I would first of all report to the Fuehrer. My chief concern was to prevent the Fuehrer from gaining the impression that Poland simply did not want to come to an understanding.

Ambassador Lipski asked me to have the problem studied once more in all its aspects by the German authorities. He would decide whether there might not be prospects of reaching a solution on the basis of the Polish ideas. He added that Foreign Minister Beck, following our suggestion, would be glad to visit Berlin; but it seemed to him that all questions involved should be adequately prepared by diplomatic methods.

At the close of our conversation I made it absolutely clear to Ambassador Lipski that in my opinion the Polish proposals could not be regarded by the Fuehrer as satisfactory. According to the German conception, only the unconditional return of Danzig to the Reich, an extra-territorial connection with East Prussia, a 25 years' non-aggression pact with frontier guarantees, and co-operation in the Slovakian question, in the form of a joint protection of this territory to be undertaken by the adjoining states, could lead to a final settlement.

von Ribbentrop

Appendix

Memorandum

I.

Today, as always, the Polish Government attach the greatest importance to the maintenance of neighborly relations with the German Reich for the longest possible period of time.

As long ago as 1933, the Polish Government gave clear proof of their attitude, in that they were among the first of the foreign Governments to pave the way for friendly relations with the Third Reich, and in that they entered into negotiations which led to the German-Polish Declaration of January 26, 1934.

The positive attitude adopted by Poland towards the National Socialist Senate in Danzig should also be mentioned here.

During the ensuing five years the Polish Government had never allowed their international political activity to involve them in any action directed against the German Reich.

Finally, it is a well-known fact that, in the autumn of 1938, Poland's determined attitude contributed very considerably to the prevention of an armed conflict in connection with the realization of the German demands.

II.

In the matter of through-traffic between Germany and East Prussia as well as in the matter of the Free City of Danzig, on which the two Governments have, so far, always come to an understanding, and in respect of which the German Government have now made new suggestions, the Polish Government have adopted the following attitude:

(a) The Polish Government have no interest in rendering traffic between East Prussia and the rest of Germany difficult in any way. The Polish Government have, therefore, despite numerous changes which have taken place during the last few years (e. g., transfer of payments), not only raised no difficulties with regard to preferential through railway traffic, but have also considered German interests when effecting the clearing in connection with this transit.

Starting from these considerations, the Polish Government are prepared to investigate, conjointly with the German Government, the possibilities for further simplification and facilitation of rail and motor traffic between East Prussia and the rest of Germany, in order to save German travellers using these routes unnecessary inconvenience. Technical experts could undertake to work out proposals for the realization of the above-mentioned aim.

All concessions on the part of Poland, however, can only be made within the scope of Polish sovereignty; there can, therefore, be no question of extra-territoriality in connection with lines of

communication. With this proviso, the Polish Government intend to meet Germany's wishes as far as possible.

(b) As far as the Free City of Danzig is concerned, it may be called to mind that the Polish Government have realized for some time the necessity of reaching an agreement on this matter by way of an understanding between Warsaw and Berlin, and have brought forward suggestions accordingly. This appeared to them especially appropriate, considering the position of the League of Nations, which is no longer able wholly to fulfil the obligations it has assumed in regard to the Free City of Danzig.

From the Polish-German conversations to date, it appears that there has been no difference of opinion about the fundamental conception that the Polish Government do not intend to restrict the free life of the German population within the Free City, and that, on the other hand, the German Government respect the rights of Poland, her economic and maritime interests as well as those connected with traffic and communications; also, the rights of the Polish population in the Free City. As these two questions are of a fundamental nature, the Polish Government believe that a solution might be reached on the basis of a common Polish-German guarantee for the Free City of Danzig. On the one hand, this guarantee would assure free development of the German cultural and civic life of Danzig, and on the other hand would safeguard Polish rights and interests. Incidentally, the Polish interests coincide with the economic interests of the population of the Free City, whose welfare has depended on Polish over-sea trade for centuries.

Instead of mooting the previously mentioned problem of traffic facilities, which the Polish Government believe to be mainly of a technical nature, and a matter for experts, the Polish and the German Governments should begin their negotiations about the Free City by discussing political principles. These discussions should follow such lines that, in accordance with the suggestions made by the German Chancellor in February 1938, the Poles would respect national conditions in the Free City, whereas the Free City and Germany would respect the rights and interests of Poland.

With a view to stabilizing conditions in this part of Europe, the Polish Government think it desirable that arrangements be made as soon as possible for an exchange of ideas on these two problems, which could be treated jointly, so that a basis might be found for a future consolidation of neighborly relations between the two countries.

No. 209 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister With the Polish Ambassador, March 27, 1939

Memorandum of Dr. Schmidt, Minister Plenipotentiary

(Translation)

The German Foreign Minister called the Polish Ambassador to account for the outrages in Bromberg,* and remarked that these new excesses had created a disastrous impression in Germany, since the prevailing opinion here was that they met with more or less toleration by the Polish authorities. Again the offenders had been the members of the West Marches Society, against whom Germany had already lodged so many previous complaints with Poland. In Germany people were of the opinion that the Polish Government were certainly in a position to prevent such incidents if they wanted to. The Foreign Minister most keenly regretted such a development in German-Polish relations, and stated emphatically that the German Government must hold the Polish Government fully responsible for such occurrences.

The Polish Ambassador declared that he had no knowledge of the incidents mentioned, but promised to make immediate enquiries. He, too, regretted the excesses but explained them away by the state of tension prevailing in Poland at the time. Moreover, he promised, for his part, to do anything in his power to prevent a repetition of such incidents.

When the Polish Ambassador asserted that similar incidents of an anti-Polish nature occurred at German club meetings, the Foreign Minister at once replied that so far, provocation had always come exclusively from the Polish side.

To the Polish Ambassador's question as to whether it might not be advisable to address "a few re-assuring words to both nations," the Foreign Minister answered that nothing of that kind would in any way meet the situation; for, as he had already said, the acts of provocation and press attacks had, so far, come exclusively from the Polish side. If the German press now began to retaliate for Polish attacks, (which he feared would soon be impossible to prevent), it would do so thoroughly.

In conclusion the Foreign Minister remarked that he no longer knew what to make of the attitude of the Polish Government. They had given a negative answer to the generous proposals which Germany had made to Poland. The Foreign Minister could not possibly regard the proposal, submitted yesterday, by the Polish Ambassador, as a basis for the settlement of existing problems. The relations between the two countries were therefore becoming more and more critical.

When taking his leave the Polish Ambassador, for his part, promised to do everything in his power to overcome the difficulties.

Schmidt

* Cf. No. 349.

No. 210 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, March 28, 1939

The excitement which has prevailed for some time in Poland has increased considerably. The wildest rumors are current among the population, e. g., that there have been fights between German and Polish troops in Oderberg, that Foreign Minister Beck has been arrested, and similar fantastic reports. Of graver significance is the development of a pro-war feeling which is being fostered by the press, by anti-German public demonstrations, especially in the provinces, which have already led to numerous incidents, and partly also by sabre-rattling semi-official propaganda. The bulk of the population today believes that war has become inevitable and imminent.

The practical measures adopted by the Government help to aggravate the existing war psychosis. In the course of last week the 1912, 1913 and 1914 classes of reserves and also sections of other classes, were called up for special formations. Furthermore, horses and motor-lorries have been requisitioned. The Government have also made the present situation a pretext for raising an internal State Loan for the expansion of the Air Force and the Anti-aircraft Artillery.

A frequently reprinted article, entitled "We are Prepared", which appeared in the military paper, *Polska Zbrojna,* is particularly characteristic of the style of the official preparedness propaganda. This article states that the Poles, unlike the Czechs, had no feeling of inferiority as regards the powerful nations of the world. The number of foreign divisions did not frighten the Poles, for their own army, its fine equipment, and the heroic spirit of the Polish nation would be sufficient to assure victory to Poland. Numerous other articles which have since been appearing in the daily press are written in the same spirit.

Given the Polish national character, this self-assurance and over-estimation of their military strength expressed in the press constitute a danger. That this is not merely press propaganda is proved by an authenticated remark made by M. Gluchowski, Vice-Minister for War, in the course of a serious conversation. He stated that Germany's armed forces were one big bluff, for she lacked trained reserves with which to bring her units up to full strength. When asked whether he seriously believed Poland to be superior to Germany from a military point of view, M. Gluchowski answered, "Why, certainly."

An anti-German demonstration arranged at the last plenary session of the Senate is also typical of the atmosphere prevailing in political circles. The first reading of the Polish-Lithuanian Commercial Treaty, witnessed from the diplomats' box by M. Saulys, the Lithuanian Minister,

gave Senator Katelbach the opportunity to assure Lithuania in the name of the Senate that Poland most strongly sympathized with Lithuania in the arduous experiences which she had just gone through. The two Ministers, who had appeared at the meeting, and Count Szembek, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, also participated in the "prolonged cheering" provoked by this statement.

von Moltke

No. 211 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, March 29, 1939

Last night, Foreign Minister Beck asked me to call on him, in order to inform me of the following: In the conversation of March 26, the German Foreign Minister had declared to Ambassador Lipski that a Polish *coup de force* against Danzig would be regarded as a *casus belli.* He said that this communication compelled him, for his part, to state that if Germany should attempt to alter the statute of the Free City by unilateral action, Poland would regard this as a *casus belli.* The same would be the case if the Danzig Senate should make such an attempt. Beck added that the Polish Government regretted the present aggravation of the situation.

I answered Beck that the aggravation had not been caused by us, but solely by the Polish mobilization measures, which were quite unjustified and were likely to have most dangerous consequences. As a result of the warlike atmosphere created by the mobilization, and intensified in a most irresponsible manner by press and propaganda, a situation fraught with grave dangers had already arisen. The serious incidents in Pommerellen proved this clearly. I drew special attention to the unheard-of outrages in Bromberg and Liniewo,* and stated that I would refer to the matter again after receiving more detailed information.

Beck tried to justify the mobilization measures by stating that, after the events in Czechoslovakia and in the Memel district, the claim raised at this very moment with regard to Danzig had been interpreted as a danger-signal by Poland. He stated that the fear that difficulties might arise from these measures was unfounded. As yet he knew nothing of the incidents at Liniewo. The incident at Bromberg**—where, by the way, the police had energetically intervened—had been made the subject of a ministerial conference. Subsequently the Premier had given the strictest orders to all administrative authorities to avoid everything that might be

* The Germans of Liniewo were attacked, during a meeting, by 25 Poles, who smashed all the furniture, completely destroyed a picture of the Fuehrer, and tore up the German national flag. Cf. No. 350.

** Cf. No. 349.

the cause of incidents, and particularly to forbid meetings and demonstrations.

Beck added that he did not wish to conceal from me that he was impressed more and more by the fact that German-Polish relations had reached a turning point.—I reminded him of the conversation at Berchtesgaden,* in which the Fuehrer had placed the maintenance of a policy of understanding before all else, and explained that the very aim of the present proposals was to put German-Polish relations on a sound and lasting basis; in order to accomplish this, we would have to expect greater understanding on the Polish side.

Moltke

No. 212 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the Foreign Office

No. 212

(Translation)

Berlin, April 6, 1939

The Polish Ambassador, whom I had asked to call on me today, turned the discussion to M. Beck's conversations in London.** M. Lipski said that he had had no detailed information on the conversations, but was in a position to state certain fundamental principles of Polish policy.

1. Poland wished to stand by the 1934 Agreement.
2. The Polish-British arrangements were of a bilateral and purely defensive character. There was no question of Poland's joining a *bloc*.

I listened to M. Lipski's remark with a slight smile and answered somewhat as follows: Recent developments of Polish policy were no longer comprehensible to me. M. Lipski knew as well as I did how strained our relations had been before the National-Socialist Government came into power. No one in Germany but the Fuehrer could have conceived and carried out in collaboration with Poland, the great ideas of the year 1934. After that date our relations had shown a steady and gratifying improvement. Following his Good Neighbor conception, the Fuehrer, as is well known, had initiated conversations with Poland, in order not only to clear away the last points of dissension between our two countries, but also to offer Poland a generous guarantee of the Corridor frontier. Poland had obviously not understood this offer. Poland, instead of accepting it eagerly, and thus completing the work of 1934, responded to our offer with rather astonishing saber rattling.

* Cf. No. 200.
** Cf. No. 286.

This answer didn't excite us, but it was in strange contrast to the answer which we might have expected from Warsaw. According to my instruction, I said that the Fuehrer's offer to Poland had been made only this once. The sort of reply which the Polish Government had given us to this offer was no basis for a settlement of the matter in question, as the German Foreign Minister had told him (Lipski), on March 27.* (Later in the conversation, I repeated that we did not regard the Polish answer as constituting a basis for discussion.) Whether Poland had been well-advised in taking up this attitude the future would show. I went on to say that I had not yet read Mr. Chamberlain's statement in the House of Commons, which had been announced for this afternoon. But if the reports of M. Beck's conversations which had already appeared in the press were correct, I could not see how the Polish attitude could any longer be reconciled with the spirit of the 1934 Agreement.

In reply to the last point, M. Lipski tried to argue that the existing Polish-French treaty had also been compatible with the 1934 Agreement. M. Lipski endeavored to represent the Polish concentration of troops in the neighborhood of Danzig as a comprehensible parallel to troop movements in other countries such as Hungary, Roumania, and even Norway. Above all, M. Lipski declared that we had maintained no contact with him at the time when the German army marched into Czechoslovakia, and that this, in contrast to our attitude last September, had led to comprehensible nervousness in Poland. The ultimatum which Germany had addressed to Lithuania had further increased Polish fears.

I cut Lipski short when he spoke of an "ultimatum" to Lithuania, ridiculed his remarks as to troop movements in other countries—which had never been directed against Poland—and declared that I should not have been surprised if he had thanked us for not opposing Warsaw's ardent desire for a common Hungarian-Polish Frontier. In short, I calmly refuted Lipski's words with the obvious arguments, after which we parted.

Weizsäcker

No. 213 Memorandum Conveyed to the Polish Foreign Ministry by the German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw, April 28, 1939

(Translation)

The German Government have been informed, through the statements made public by the Polish and British Governments, of the results so far achieved and of the ultimate object of the negotiations recently conducted by Poland and Great Britain. According to these statements,

* Cf. No. 209.

the Polish and British Governments have exchanged temporary assurances,* to be replaced shortly by a permanent agreement, designed to assure Poland and Great Britain of mutual assistance in the event of any threat, direct or indirect, to the independence of either.

The German Government, therefore, feel compelled to make the following communication to the Polish Government in this connection:

When, in 1933, the National Socialist Government applied themselves to the task of reorganizing German foreign policy, their first aim, after Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations, was to place German-Polish relations on a new footing.

The Fuehrer of the German Reich and the late Marshal Pilsudski were united in the resolve to break with the political methods of the past and to pave the way for a direct friendly understanding between the two States, which would enable them to deal with all questions affecting their mutual relations.

It was intended to create a guarantee of peace by unconditionally renouncing the application of force, in any form, by either State against the other, and thus to facilitate the great task of both Governments—the task of finding a solution for all problems, political, economic and cultural, on the basis of an equitable and fair adjustment of the interests of both parties.

These principles, which were given the form of a binding contract when they were laid down in the German-Polish Peace Declaration of January 26, 1934,** were designed to inaugurate a totally new phase in the development of German-Polish relations, as in fact they have done.

The practical value they have had for both nations has been proved by the political history of the past five years; and as late as the 26th of last January, the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration, both parties bore public testimony to this fact and stressed their unanimous desire to abide in future by the principles laid down in 1934.**

The arrangement which the Polish Government have now concluded with the British Government is in such open contradiction to these solemn declarations made a few months ago, that the German Government can only regard such a sudden and radical change of Polish policy with astonishment and estrangement.

The new arrangement between Poland and Great Britain, whatever its final form may be, is intended by both partners as a regular treaty of alliance, which, in view of the events leading up to it and in view of the whole political situation, is directed solely against Germany.

It follows from the obligations now undertaken by the Polish Government, that in the event of a German-British conflict, Poland would be ready to intervene by attacking Germany, even if the conflict does not in any way affect Poland and her interests. This is a direct and flagrant breach of the Declaration of 1934, in which all resort to force was renounced.

* Cf. No. 286.
** Cf. No. 37.

But the disparity between the German-Polish Declaration and the Polish-British Agreement, has a far-reaching significance even beyond this consideration. The Declaration of 1934 was intended to be the basis on which, by virtue of the protection afforded by the mutual peace guarantee, all questions arising between the two countries could be settled by means of direct discussions between Berlin and Warsaw, untrammelled by international combinations and commitments or by outside influence. Such a basis naturally implies implicit mutual confidence between the two parties, and also sincerity of the political intentions of each party towards the other.

But now, on the contrary, the Polish Government have shown, by their decision to enter into an alliance against Germany, that Poland prefers the promise of assistance for a third Power to the direct peace guarantee assured her by the German Government.

At the same time, the German Government are compelled to assume that the Polish Government at present attach no further importance to seeking a solution to German-Polish problems by means of direct friendly discussions with the German Government. The Polish Government have thus departed from the method agreed upon in 1934 for the adjustment of German-Polish relations.

The Polish Government cannot put forward the plea that the Declaration of 1934 did not affect existing obligations previously assumed by Poland or Germany toward other states, and that, therefore, the alliance between Poland and France remained in force. The Polish-French alliance was an established fact when, in 1934, Poland and Germany began to readjust their relations. The German Government could acquiesce in this fact, since they were justified in their expectation that any dangers accruing from the Polish-French alliance, which was concluded at a time of acute political tension between Germany and Poland, would gradually lose their significance with the growth of friendly relations between Germany and Poland.

Poland's entry into an alliance with Great Britain, which has now taken place, five years after the Declaration of 1934, is therefore in no wise comparable, from a political point of view, with the fact that the Polish-French alliance remained operative. By this new alliance the Polish Government have made themselves party to a policy instigated by another state and aiming at the encirclement of Germany.

The German Government, on the other hand, have not given the slightest cause for such a change of Polish policy. On every possible occasion, the German Government gave Poland the most definite assurances, both publicly and in confidential conversations, that the friendly development of German-Polish relations was an essential aim of their foreign policy, and that, in making political decisions, they would always respect Poland's rightful interests.

In the view of the German Government, the action inaugurated by Germany in March of this year for the pacification of Central Europe

has in no wise impaired Polish interests. A common Polish-Hungarian frontier, which Poland had always regarded as an important political aim, was established in connection with this action.

Moreover, the German Government have expressed their unqualified readiness to engage in a friendly discussion with the Polish Government, if the latter felt that new problems had arisen for Poland as a result of the readjustment of relations in Central Europe.

In the same friendly spirit, the German Government tried to reach a solution of the only question still pending between Germany and Poland, namely, the Danzig question. For years Germany has made it plain to Poland that a new settlement of this question was vitally needed, and Poland never denied the fact. For some time past, the German Government have repeatedly attempted to convince the Polish Government that there really was a possibility of reaching a settlement, which would satisfy the interests of both parties, and that the removal of this final obstacle would pave the way for auspicious political co-operation between Germany and Poland.

The German Government did not confine themselves to suggestions of a general nature, but in the most friendly manner possible made proposals to the Polish Government, the last occasion being at the end of March of this year, for a settlement on the following basis:

The return of Danzig to the Reich,

Ex-territorial railway and motor-road connection between East Prussia and the Reich;

In return, recognition of the entire Polish Corridor and the entire Polish western frontier,

Conclusion of a twenty-five year non-aggression pact,

Guarantee of Poland's economic interests in Danzig and a generous settlement of the remaining economic and traffic problems arising for Poland out of the reunion of Danzig with the Reich.

At the same time, the German Government declared their willingness, in guaranteeing the independence of Slovakia, to consider Polish interests.

No unprejudiced person acquainted with existing conditions in Danzig and in the Corridor, and conversant with the problems involved, can dispute the fact that this proposal represented the minimum which had to be demanded from the standpoint of Germany's unrelinquishable interests and of Polish needs. The Polish Government's reply, however, although couched in the form of counter-proposals, showed in its substance a complete lack of appreciation of the German point of view and was tantamount to a rejection of the German offer.

The Polish Government have shown in a manner as surprising as it is drastic, namely by an order for extensive partial mobilization, that they themselves did not regard their reply as calculated to lead to a

friendly understanding. By this entirely unjustified measure, they characterized in advance the aim and purpose of the negotiations with the British Government, upon which they entered immediately afterwards.

The German Government did not consider it necessary to reply to the Polish partial mobilization by adopting military counter-measures.

On the other hand, they cannot tacitly pass over other decisions recently made by the Polish Government, but much to their regret, feel themselves obliged to make the following statement:

1. The Polish Government have not seized the opportunity offered them by the German Government for an equitable settlement of the Danzig problem, for an ultimate guarantee of the frontier separating Poland from Germany, and consequently for a lasting consolidation of a neighborly relationship between the two countries. They have, in fact, rejected the German proposals to this effect.

2. At the same time, the Polish Government have assumed political obligations towards another state, which are incompatible with the spirit as well as with the letter of the German-Polish Declaration of January 26, 1934. The Polish Government have thereby arbitrarily and unilaterally rendered this Declaration inoperative.

Although the German Government feel it incumbent upon them to make the foregoing statement, they do not intend to alter their fundamental attitude with regard to the future adjustment of German-Polish relations. Should the Polish Government still wish for a fresh contractual settlement of these relations, the German Government are prepared for such a settlement, and make only the one stipulation that it must be based on a definite obligation binding to both parties.

No. 214 Speech by the Fuehrer to the Reichstag, April 28, 1939

Extract

(Translation)

. . . There is little to be said as regards German-Polish relations. Here, too, the Treaty of Versailles—of course intentionally—inflicted a most severe wound on Germany. The strange way in which the Corridor, giving Poland access to the sea, was marked out was meant above all to prevent for all time the establishment of an understanding between Poland and Germany. This problem is—as I have already stressed—perhaps the most painful of all problems for Germany. Nevertheless I have never ceased to uphold the view that the necessity of free access to the sea for the Polish State cannot be ignored, and that as a general principle, which also applies in this case, nations whom Providence has destined or, if you like, condemned to live side by side would be well advised not to make life unnecessarily harder for each other.

The late Marshal Pilsudski, who was of the same opinion, was prepared to go into the question of taking the sting out of German-Polish relations, and finally to conclude an Agreement whereby Germany and Poland expressed their intention of renouncing war altogether as a means of settling the questions which concerned them both. This Agreement contained one single exception which in practice was conceded to Poland. It was laid down that the pacts of mutual assistance already entered into by Poland—meaning the pact with France—should not be affected by the Agreement. But it was obvious that this could apply only to the mutual assistance pact which had been previously concluded, and not to any new pacts which might be concluded in the future. It is a fact that the German-Polish Agreement contributed a very remarkable *détente* to the European situation.

Nevertheless there remained one unsettled question between Germany and Poland, which naturally had to be solved sooner or later—the question of the German city of Danzig. Danzig is a German city and wishes to belong to Germany. On the other hand, this city has treaties with Poland, which, however, were forced upon her by the dictators of Versailles. But since the League of Nations, formerly the greatest fomenter of trouble, is now represented by a High Commissioner of extraordinary tact, the problem of Danzig must in any case come up for discussion, to be solved at the latest when this calamitous institution finally comes to an end. I regard the peaceful settlement of this problem as a further contribution to a final relaxation of European tension. For this *détente* is assuredly not to be achieved by the agitations of demented war-mongers, but by the removal of real elements of danger. Since the problem of Danzig have been repeatedly discussed some months ago, I have now made a concrete offer to the Polish Government. I will reveal this offer to you, members of the Reichstag, and you yourselves shall judge whether it does not represent the greatest concession conceivable in the interests of European peace. As I have already pointed out, I have always seen that an outlet to the sea was absolutely necessary for Poland, and have consequently taken this necessity into consideration. I am no democratic statesman, but a National-Socialist and a realist. I do, however, consider it necessary to make it clear to the Government in Warsaw that just as they desire access to the sea, so Germany needs access to her province of East Prussia. Now these are all difficult problems. It is not Germany who is responsible for them, but the jugglers of Versailles, who in their malice and short-sightedness deposited hundreds of powder barrels all over Europe, each equipped with an almost inextinguishable lighted fuse.

These problems cannot be solved according to old-fashioned theories; I think, rather, that we should adopt new methods. Poland's access to the sea by way of the Corridor, and *pari passu* a German route through the Corridor, have no kind of military importance whatsoever. Their

importance is exclusively psychological and economic. He who accords military importance to a traffic route of this kind shows himself completely ignorant of military affairs.

I have now had the following proposal submitted to the Polish Government:

1. Danzig returns as a Free State into the framework of the German Reich.
2. Germany receives a route through the Corridor and a railway line at her own disposal, having the same extraterritorial status for Germany as the Corridor itself has for Poland.
   In return Germany is prepared:
   1. to recognize all Polish economic rights in Danzig,
   2. to ensure for Poland a free harbor in Danzig of any size desired to which she (Poland) would have completely free access,
   3. thereupon to accept the frontiers between Germany and Poland and to regard them as final,
   4. to conclude a 25-year non-aggression pact with Poland, that is, a pact which would extend far beyond the duration of my own life, and
   5. to safeguard the independence of the Slovak State jointly with Poland and Hungary, which means in practice the renunciation of any unilateral German hegemony in this territory.

The Polish Government have rejected my offer and have only declared that they are prepared

1. to negotiate concerning the question of a substitute for the League Commissioner, and
2. to consider facilities for through traffic across the Corridor.

I sincerely regretted this incomprehensible attitude on the part of the Polish Government. But that alone is not the decisive factor. Far worse is the fact that Poland, like Czechoslovakia a year ago, now believes, under the pressure of lying international agitation, that she must call up troops, although Germany on her part has not called up a single man and has not thought of taking any kind of action against Poland. As I have said, this is in itself very regrettable, and some day posterity will decide whether it was really right to refuse this proposition, which I make once and only once. This was, as I have said, an endeavor on my part to solve, by a truly unique compromise, a problem intimately affecting the entire German people, and to solve it to the advantage of both countries.

According to my conviction Poland was by no means the giver in this solution but only the receiver; for that Danzig would never become Polish is certainly beyond any doubt.

Germany's alleged aggressive intentions, a mere figment of the international press, led, as you know, to the so-called guarantee offers and to Poland's incurring an obligation for mutual assistance, which would compel her under certain circumstances to take military action against Germany in the event of a conflict between Germany and any other Power, in which Britain would be involved.

This obligation is contrary to the Agreement which I made with Marshal Pilsudski some years ago. In that Agreement reference is made exclusively to obligations existing at that time, namely to the obligations of Poland towards France, of which we were quite aware.

A subsequent extension of these obligations is contrary to the terms of the German-Polish non-aggression pact.

If present conditions had then prevailed, I should never have signed the pact. What sense can non-aggression pacts have if one party claims that, in practice, innumerable cases must be regarded as exceptions. There is either collective security, which means collective insecurity and continual danger of war, or clear agreements which must fundamentally exclude any use of arms between the contracting parties.

I therefore look upon the Agreement which Marshal Pilsudski and I concluded in the past as having been unilaterally infringed by Poland and thereby no longer in existence.

I have sent a communication to this effect to the Polish Government.* However, I can only repeat at this point that this does not constitute a modification of my attitude on the problems mentioned above. Should the Polish Government wish to come to new contractual arrangements concerning their relations with Germany, I can only welcome such an idea, provided, of course, that the arrangements are based on an absolutely clear obligation, equally binding both parties. Germany, at any rate, is only too willing to undertake such obligations and also to fulfil them. . . .

No. 215 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, May 2, 1939

I have already reported elsewhere on the official attitude towards the Fuehrer's speech. The semi-official attitude has been published in all its variations both by the Government organs and by the Opposition press. During the last few days public opinion has definitely stiffened further in its attitude towards Germany. Even papers which undoubt-

* Cf. No. 213.

edly are officially inspired have struck a belligerent note, and have even demanded that Danzig become Polish. Very significant also is the statement of the local *Gazeta Polska* that, in view of German methods and the situation resulting from them, the Polish Government see themselves compelled to demand in the future more definite guarantees for Polish rights and Polish status for Danzig.

A further sign of the unyielding attitude towards the German demands—which is becoming more and more evident in Poland—is to be seen in the fact that today's press emphasizes particularly the importance of the British guarantee to Poland. Reference is made to alleged British assurances, according to which the Polish Government can decide alone whether Poland must take up arms and whether, consequently, Great Britain will have to fulfil her obligations.

This very week—most likely on Friday—Foreign Minister Beck will probably elucidate the Polish point of view in a speech before the Sejm.

von Wühlisch

No. 216 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, May 23, 1939

Some days ago I had an opportunity of conversing with the Under-Secretary of State, Arciszewski. The following points of the conversation struck me as noteworthy:

Obviously it was a matter of importance to M. Arciszewski to make it clear that the change of Polish policy, as expressed by the British-Polish guarantee declaration, could not be attributed to the personal initiative of M. Beck. M. Beck had most reluctantly joined in this policy under pressure from the army and from public opinion. In the end he was no longer in a position to refuse the British offer. But he had again and again postponed public discussion of the matter, which, in view of the general atmosphere prevalent here, appeared inopportune, until the Fuehrer's speech had compelled him to reply. His answer before the Sejm, in which he was forced to defend a policy which was not his own, and the enthusiasm which the speech had caused among the Polish public, had only filled M. Beck with bitterness. M. Arciszewski then described dramatically how on the day after his speech in the Sejm, M. Beck, in a fit of rage, had thrown a whole pile of congratulatory telegrams into a corner. Even today M. Beck was fundamentally an adherent of the former policy. It struck him as particularly foolish that two relatively poor countries, Germany and Poland, should fight one

another—a development which, after all, could be in the interest of the rich countries alone.

This version may be slightly colored. Yet various other observations lead to the same conclusion, for M. Beck, in the course of the last few months, had lost more and more followers by pursuing the policy towards Germany initiated by Marshal Pilsudski. When the possibility of obtaining a British guarantee for the Polish western frontiers presented itself, it was obviously military circles who brought about the change of policy. M. Beck then saw himself forced to join in this policy, if for no other reason than the maintenance of his power.

von Moltke

CHAPTER TWO

British War Policy

A. British Rearmament and Anti-German Propaganda (September, 1938 to July, 1939)

No. 217 Joint Declaration Made by the Fuehrer and Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, Munich, September 30, 1938

(Translation)

We, the German Fuehrer and Chancellor and the British Prime Minister, have had a further meeting today and are agreed in recognizing that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for both countries and for Europe.

We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.

We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference, and thus to contribute to assuring the peace of Europe.

Adolf Hitler
Neville Chamberlain

No. 218 Extract from a Speech by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, October 3, 1938

". . . I believe there are many who will feel with me that such a declaration, signed by the German Chancellor and myself, is something more than a pious expression of opinion. In our relations with other countries everything depends upon there being sincerity and good will on both sides. I believe that there is sincerity and good will on both sides in this declaration. That is why to me its significance goes far beyond its actual words. If there is one lesson which we should learn from the events of these last weeks it is this, that lasting peace is not to be obtained by sitting still and waiting for it to come. It requires active, positive efforts to achieve it. No doubt I shall have plenty of critics who will say that I am guilty of facile optimism, and that I should disbelieve every word that is uttered by rulers of other great States in Europe. I am too much of a realist to believe that we are going to achieve our paradise in a day. We have only laid the foundations of peace. The superstructure is not even begun.

For a long period now we have been engaged in this country in a great program of rearmament, which is daily increasing in pace and

volume. Let no one think that because we have signed this agreement between these four Powers at Munich we can afford to relax our efforts in regard to that program at this moment. Disarmament on the part of this country can never be unilateral again. We have tried that once, and we very nearly brought ourselves to disaster. If disarmament is to come, it must come by steps, and it must come by agreement and the active co-operation of other countries. Until we know that we have obtained that co-operation and until we have agreed upon the actual steps to be taken, we here must remain on guard. . . . . ."

No. 219 Extract from a Speech by the Fuehrer in Saarbrücken, October 9, 1938

(Translation)

. . . It is, however, precisely the experiences of these last eight months which can and must fortify us in our decision to be prudent and to leave nothing undone which must be done for the protection of the Reich.

The statesmen on the other side desire peace—that we must believe. They, however, govern countries with an internal structure which makes it possible that they may at any time be replaced by others who are not so intent on peace. And there *are* others of this type.

It is only necessary for Mr. Duff Cooper, Mr. Eden, or Mr. Churchill to come into power in Great Britain for peace to be disrupted. We know for certain that it would be the aim of these men to start a new World War immediately. They make no secret of it; in fact, they openly admit it.

. . . As a strong state, we are ready at any time for a policy of appeasement with our neighbors. We have no claims upon them; we want nothing but peace. There is only one thing that we wish for: that Great Britain would gradually dispense with some of the idiosyncrasies of the Versailles epoch. We cannot put up any longer with the moralizing of a governess!

Inquiries from British politicians about the fate of Germans or of German nationals within the frontiers of the Reich are out of place. We do not concern ourselves with similar things in Great Britain. The rest of the world would often have better reason to concern itself with its own national events, as for instance with what is happening in Palestine.

We, in any case, leave it to those who feel themselves called upon by God to solve these problems, and we only marvel, as we watch them, how quickly they have managed to find a solution for them.

We should like to advise all these gentlemen to busy themselves with their own problems and to leave us alone! That, too, will help to assure world peace.

We ourselves have great tasks ahead of us. Tremendous cultural and economic problems must be solved. No nation needs peace more than we. On the other hand no nation knows better than we what it means to be weak and to be left at the mercy of others. . . .

No. 220 Speech by Mr. Hore-Belisha, British Secretary of State for War, in the Mansion House, London, October 10, 1938

Extract

. . . More still, however, is to be done to give full force and opportunity to the Territorial Army as a whole. We are to have five divisions of anti-aircraft—five anti-aircraft divisions instead of two—with a Corps Commander and a Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

. . . This Army must, with modifications appropriate to its peculiar character, be given the same content and put on the same footing as the Regular Army. Look at it today! Nominally organized in divisions, it is deficient in many of the up-to-date units which the Regular Army has, and the necessary proportion of arms and services are lacking. These shortcomings must be made good.

The infantry will have both light and heavy machine-gun battalions. The artillery—following the lines of the Regular Army—will have 8-gun batteries instead of 4-gun batteries.

The following types of unit, which do not exist in the Territorial Army will be provided:—Cavalry light tank regiments, anti-tank regiments, light anti-aircraft regiments, tank battalions, and there will be added a kind of battalion non-existent in the Regular Army but suitable to the citizen soldier—motor-cycle battalions. There will be three of these. They will be used in new motorized divisions also to be created.

As regards the formation organization, infantry brigades will in future have three battalions, as in the Regular Army, instead of four. Employing the material that we have, we find that we can form nine complete divisions on the Regular model with their proper proportion of arms and services, three motorized divisions and a mobile division, also complete with their proper proportion of arms and services.

In addition, there will be the two cavalry brigades. No commander will be appointed in peace to the Territorial Mobile Division because, owing to the scattered disposition of the units, this would be impracticable. Suitable arrangements will be made for their training. We have provided also a considerable number of modern corps and Army suits, such as Army Field and Survey regiments. R. A. and Corps Signals will be ready to take their place in such formations should war eventuate. This is also in accordance with Regular Army organization.

. . . Thus we carry the Territorial Army one stage farther along in its progress, and show both its members and the State that we rely on them not only in word but in deed, enabling those who serve in this force to fulfil both themselves and the purposes of a modern army.

No. 221 The German Ambassador in Paris to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Paris, October 12, 1938

From a well-informed source, I learn that the visit of Sir Cyril Newall was due primarily to British instigation.

The British Government is said to have been anxious to return the visit paid by General Vuillemin to England some time ago as soon as possible after the end of the crisis, especially since no conversation had taken place between the Chiefs of the two General Staffs since General Vuillemin's visit to Germany.

I heard also that tactical discussions are not provided for in the program of the visit. The Chief of the British General Staff intends primarily to inquire into the technical condition of the French Air Force, about which very unsatisfactory information had reached him. Great Britain also intends, it is said, to dissuade France from making further purchases in the United States of America, and is offering British types as an alternative. The alleged reason for this is that, in the event of war, the joint commander-in-chief to be appointed for the British and French Air Forces would be in a better position to judge what tasks could be expected of the French squadrons.

By Order

Bräuer

No. 222 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, October 18, 1938

On October 13, at Sheffield, Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, made a speech in which he pointed out the necessity for coordinating and organizing the man-power available for home defense. His statements were generally interpreted here to mean that even in times of peace the Government were planning the introduction of a so-called

national register of all those volunteers who would be willing to place themselves at the disposal of the State in time of war.

A further measure of defense was announced on the 14th inst. by the War Office, and was dealt with in a broadcast address by Mr. Hore-Belisha, Secretary of State for War, on the evening of the same day. The object of the new measure is to form a branch of the Territorial Army for the defense of vital industries against attack by aircraft. Such protection is to be carried out by the employees of the establishments concerned.

By Order

von Selzam

No. 223 Extract from a Speech by Mr. Winston Churchill, Broadcast to the United States of America, October 16, 1938

. . . We must arm. If, through an earnest desire for peace, we have placed ourselves at a disadvantage, we must make up for it by redoubled exertions, and, if necessary, by fortitude in suffering. We shall no doubt arm.

Britain, casting away the habits of centuries, will decree national service upon her citizens. The British people will stand erect and will face whatever may be coming. But arms-instrumentalities—as President Wilson called them—are not sufficient by themselves. We must add to them the power of ideas.

People say we ought not to allow ourselves to be drawn into a theoretical antagonism between Nazidom and democracy, but the antagonism is here now.

It is this very conflict of spiritual and moral ideas which gives the free countries a great part of their strength.

. . . The light of civilized progress with its tolerances and co-operations, with its dignities and joys, has often in the past been blotted out.

But I hold the belief that we have now at last got far enough ahead of barbarism to control it and to avert it, if only we realize what is afoot and make up our minds in time. We shall do it in the end. But how much harder our toil, the longer the delay!

Is this a call to war? I declare it to be the sole guarantee of peace. The swift and resolute gathering of forces to confront not only military but moral aggression; the resolute and sober acceptance of their duty by the English-speaking peoples and by all the nations, great and small, who wish to walk with them; their faithful and zealous comradeship would almost between night and morning clear the path of progress and banish from all our lives the fear which already darkens the sunlight to hundreds of millions of men. . . .

No. 224 Speech by the Fuehrer in Weimar, November 6, 1938

Extract

(Translation)

. . . As a peace-loving man, I have endeavored to give the German people those arms which are calculated to urge others to keep the peace!

There are, it is true, people who hurl insults at a hedgehog because it has prickles. All they need do is to leave the animal alone. Hedgehogs only attack when danger is at hand. We should like to observe the same principle! But let everybody beware of meddling in our affairs. All we desire is to live in peace, to go on with our work and, for our people, the right to live, the same right other nations claim for themselves.

It is this that the democratic states, who are perpetually talking of equality, ought to grasp and to understand. When they speak of the rights of small nations, how can they feel outraged if a great nation claims the same right? Our National-Socialist armed forces will help us to ensure and to guarantee this legitimate claim.

With this end in view I have made a change in my foreign policy and have drawn closer to those states which, like us, are forced to defend their rights.

Looking back today upon the results of this policy, I can say: Judge for yourselves, all of you, whether we have not attained tremendous achievements by applying these principles.

For this very reason, however, we will never forget to what we owe these successes. Certain foreign papers write today: "You could have achieved all this by means of negotiations!"—But we know only too well that the Germany before our day spent all her time in perpetual negotiations. For fifteen years she did nothing but negotiate, and in so doing lost everything. I am equally ready to negotiate. But let there be no doubt on the following points:

I shall never allow Germany's rights to be impaired either by means of negotiations or in any other way.

Never forget, German people, to whom you owe your successes, to what movement, to what ideas and to what principles! And always be prudent, always be on your guard!

It is all very fine to talk of international peace and international disarmament, but I for my part entertain grave doubts about the disarmament of those who are still fully armed in spirit.

A curious custom has arisen in the world of dividing the nations into so-called totalitarian, i.e. disciplined, and democratic states. In the totalitarian, i.e. in the disciplined, it is a matter of course that foreign nations are neither calumniated nor lied about and that war-mongering

is non-existent. The democratic states, being "democratic" permit all these things to happen within their bounds.

In the totalitarian states war-mongering is naturally not permissible, for their governments are pledged to see that war-mongering does not take place. But in the democracies, governments have only one duty: to maintain democracy, that is, freedom to foment a war whenever it appears necessary.

A short time ago, I mentioned three of these international war-mongers by name. They took exception to what I said, not on principle, but only because I dared to mention them by name. Mr. Churchill openly declared that in his opinion the present régime in Germany should be removed with the assistance of forces within Germany which would gladly place themselves at his disposal for the purpose.

If Mr. Churchill would choose his friends not so much in *émigré* circles, i.e. among paid traitors who receive bribes abroad, but in German circles, he would realize the complete folly and idiocy of his idle talk. I can assure this gentleman, who seems to be living on the moon, of one fact: no force exists in Germany which could turn against the present régime. In Germany there is only one force, the force of the German nation, expressed in its leaders and their followers, in defense and in arms.

I will not dispute with this gentleman that we have no right to demand, for instance, that other nations should change their constitutions. But as the leader of the German people, it is my duty to take these constitutions into consideration, as well as their potentialities. Perhaps a few days ago, the deputy leader of the Opposition in the British House of Commons declared that he made no secret of the fact that he would welcome the destruction of Germany and Italy. Naturally, I could not prevent that man and his party from governing, in a year or two, England in accordance with the rules of the democratic game.

But this I can assure him: I shall prevent him from destroying Germany! And just as I am convinced that the German people will take care that the plans of these gentlemen in regard to Germany are doomed to failure, so Fascist Italy will, I know, take care of herself.

In my opinion, all these international aspirations contain only one lesson for us all: namely, to hold firmly together and to hold by our friends. The more we in Germany unite into an inseparable community, the less chance of success for these war-mongers, and the closer the bonds binding us with that State, namely Italy, which is in the same position as ourselves.

Today, when we once again review the year 1938, we can only be filled with great pride and supreme happiness. Germany has grown greater in the most natural and, morally speaking, in the most incontestible manner conceivable! Millions of men and women of German blood, whose one longing and one aim it was to return to Germany,

have now become members of our community. They will from now on do their share in supporting the Reich, and will serve it as loyal members, since they themselves know best what being cut off and forsaken means.

But this year is also a year of great obligations for us.

We must gain from it the conviction and the resolve never again to quit this path which, as we have seen, is leading us to success. If the rest of the world speaks of disarmament, we too are prepared to disarm, but only on one condition: war-mongering must be disarmed first! As long as the rest of the world only talks of disarmament and continues its infamous war-mongering, we assume that it only wants to steal our arms in order to prepare for us again the fate of 1918-1919.

In this connection there is only one thing that I can say to Mr. Churchill and his associates. What has happened once shall never happen again! . . . . .

No. 225 Speech by the German Foreign Minister to the Foreign Press Association in Berlin, November 7, 1938

(Translation)

Extract

. . . . . The position of the Third Reich as a world Power is now definitely established. But this does not mean that Germany does not share the desire for a settlement of the interests of the various Powers.

In this connection it may be recalled here that it was the Fuehrer who invited the Powers to Munich in September to find a peaceful way out of the crisis. In the same spirit, at the desire of the British Prime Minister, the Fuehrer made with him on the day of his departure the famous Anglo-German peace declaration.

We were all the more astonished that the first answer to the spirit of Munich took the form of the slogan: "Peace is saved, therefore arm to the utmost." The new armament fever in several countries is accompanied by renewed efforts on the part of incorrigible war agitators.

In this connection, we must note with regret that these war agitators, fearing that Germany's well-known and uncompromising legal demand for the return of the former German colonies might be fulfilled, are carrying on in the African press an amazing propaganda against Germany and everything German.

Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax have with wise insight given a clear rebuke to all these British war agitators and their endeavors to drive the nations apart. M. Daladier, the French Premier, and his Foreign Minister, M. Bonnet, have likewise made speeches in the last few weeks which have been well received in Germany.

It may be expected that in the further pursuit of the path entered upon with Great Britain at Munich, new possibilities of better understanding

between Germany and France as well will result and will take an appropriate form. In this sense, the desire of the French Foreign Minister for sincere collaboration between Germany and France has been welcomed by us. The newly confirmed settlement between Italy and Great Britain is on the same lines.

This attitude on the part of the responsible statesmen in London and Paris admits the hope that reason may after all gain the upper hand over the war agitators in the western democracies. In his speech at Weimar yesterday the Fuehrer condemned the activities of these war agitators with relentless vigor and logic. Against these activities the German nation stands united and firm behind its Fuehrer: strong and alert, always ready for peace but without fear of war, and always resolved to preserve the vital rights of the nation against anyone.

No. 226 Statement by Sir Kingsley Wood, British Secretary of State for Air, in the House of Commons, November 16, 1938

Extract

Negotiations with the representatives of the Canadian industry have now been successfully concluded, and agreements have been signed under which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have placed an initial order for the manufacture of large bomber aircraft. The Canadian aircraft firms concerned undertake to maintain during the next 10 years a manufacturing capacity available for further potential orders of a similar character if required.

The contractual arrangements have been made with the new central company, Canadian Associated Aircraft, Limited, which has been brought into being expressly for the purpose of this scheme. That company will control the whole scheme and provide two central establishments, located at Montreal and Toronto respectively. These two central establishments will themselves in due course develop manufacturing facilities, while also serving as central erecting establishments fed by components supplied by six associated aircraft companies, namely:

Canadian Car and Foundry Company, Limited.
Canadian Vickers, Limited.
Fairchild Aircraft, Limited.
Fleet Aircraft, Limited.
National Steel Car Corporation, Limited.
Ottawa Car Manufacturing Company, Limited.

The initial order will ensure immediate implementation of the plans and will enable the increased potential progressively to be developed. It is the intention that further orders should be placed as and when

necessary to maintain the progressive development of the manufacturing potential and the desired flow of production. In addition to the arrangements for group manufacture of large bomber aircraft, negotiations are now proceeding in London with two Canadian companies for the manufacture of fighter and general reconnaissance types, at Fort William and Vancouver respectively. . . . . .

No. 227 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, November 22, 1938

The Prime Minister informed the House of Commons yesterday that no definite program has been arranged for the visit of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax to Paris. It may be assumed from information available here that it is intended to discuss all current problems bearing on the relations of both countries to the rest of Europe.

The talks on the armament question will be of a general character, for no military experts will be present. Both parties are desirous of remedying the deficiencies which became obvious during the September crisis. Britain's chief interest will be centered on the strengthening of the French air force, especially on the increase of French bombing planes, since the present fighting standard of the French air force is generally considered rather poor. In view of the situation created by the loss of Czechoslovakia as a military ally, the French are anxious to obtain assurances from Britain regarding the strengthening of a British Expeditionary Force in case of an emergency. It is a well-known fact that the maximum strength of such a force has hitherto been fixed at 2 to 3 divisions. The most recent British armament scheme had made no allowance for any increase of this expeditionary force. In this connection Russia's relations towards France and, consequently, towards Britain will play an important part.

Dirksen

No. 228 The German Ambassador in Paris to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Paris, November 25, 1938

The Anglo-French talks, which took place yesterday, concluded with the publication of an official *communiqué* and broadcast statements by

both premiers. They affirmed that the talks had taken place in a spirit of complete concord, and that they had achieved their object of agreeing to follow a common line of policy in both countries, particularly with regard to national defense and diplomatic action. The comparatively casual tone of this announcement should not veil the fact that important results have been achieved.

As anticipated, question of defense was main subject under discussion, based on necessity for closest co-ordination and co-operation. French demanded in particular assurance of a strong British Expeditionary Force; British, a considerable increase in the strength of the French air force; and both Powers, the safeguarding of the lines of communication between the two countries and their colonies. On these points, agreement on general lines is said to have been reached, and experts have already been appointed to discuss the settlement of technical details.

Welczeck

No. 229 Speech by Mr. R. S. Hudson, Secretary, Overseas Trade Department, in the House of Commons, November 30, 1938

Extract

. . . . . Finally, we come to the question of Germany. The Hon. Member asked why we did not refuse to extend the Most-Favored-Nation treatment to Germany, following the example of the United States. The answer is that Germany is refused Most-Favored-Nation treatment by the United States because she is discriminating against American goods in Germany. Germany is not discriminating against British goods in Germany. Our complaint is that Germany is, by her methods, destroying trade throughout the world. We thus have no case for taking away Most-Favored-Nation treatment, which depends upon how Germany treats our goods in Germany, and the question is the very much broader one of how to meet the new form of German competition throughout the world.

. . . . . As far as we can make out, because it is difficult to get very exact information as to the way in which things are done in Germany, the basis of their hold is that they pay to producers in Central and South-Eastern Europe much more than the world price. Obviously, they do that at the expense of their own people. How they treat their own people is a matter for the German Government, but it does affect us.

. . . . . I am trying to explain that by these methods Germany is obtaining a stranglehold on the countries in that part of Europe, an uneconomic stranglehold at the expense of her own people, because it means raising the cost of living to her own people, and, in fact, exporting

goods at less than cost price. Hon. Members ask: "What is the solution here?"

. . . . . We have made a survey of all possible methods, and the only way we see is by organizing our industries in such a way that they will be able to speak as units with their opposite numbers in Germany and say, "Unless you are prepared to put an end to this form of treatment, unless you are prepared to come to an agreement to sell your goods at prices which represent a reasonable return, then we will fight you and beat you at your own game." This country is infinitely stronger financially than, I was going to say, any other country in the world, but certainly stronger than Germany, and therefore we have great advantages, advantages which I believe will result in our winning the fight; but it is an essential preliminary that our own industries should be organized. . . . . .

No. 230 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, December 5, 1938

During the meeting of the House of Commons on December 1, 1938, Captain McEwen asked the Prime Minister whether his attention had been drawn to recent reports to the effect that Germany was in process of mobilizing three army corps, and whether he had any statement to make on the subject.

The Prime Minister replied that he had seen the statements to which Captain McEwen referred, but that the British Government had received no confirmation of these reports.

By Order

von Selzam

No. 231 Speech by Mr. Malcom MacDonald, British Secretary of State for the Colonies, in the House of Commons, December 7, 1938

Extract

. . . . . I do not believe that there is today any section of opinion in this country that is disposed to hand over to any other country the care

of any of the territories or peoples for whose government we are responsible, either as a colonial or as a mandatory Power. That view has been expressed this afternoon in every part of the House, and it is a view which is shared by His Majesty's Government. We are not discussing this matter; we are not considering it; it is not now an issue in practical politics.

If we were ever to come to a discussion of this question, there are certain things which would have to be borne in mind. In the first place, this country is not the only country concerned. Britain is not the only country which assumed additional territorial responsibilities after the War. Other countries would also be involved, and the question would have to be examined by all countries concerned together. But there is another consideration of very great importance, which is referred to in the Motion and in both of the Amendments. The peoples who would be most directly and vitally affected by any such proposals are the peoples who live in the mandated territories themselves. We cannot regard them as mere goods and chattels to be disposed of summarily; we have responsibilities and obligations with regard to those peoples. We must pay attention to their own wishes; we must consider the wishes of the different sections of the population in those territories.

So far as British mandated areas are concerned, there are not only the large indigenous native populations; in some places there are also European settlers who have put whatever wealth they possessed into these countries, and who have played a great part in their development over the last 20 years. In some places there are important Indian communities. We must have regard to the right of these people to express their opinions on a question which is all-important to them, and we must attach full weight and force to those opinions. It would be impossible to consider any alteration in the status of any of these territories without paying full regard to the spontaneous views of the inhabitants. Moreover, these peoples have certain treaty rights. These peoples have certain material interests in those areas. Those rights and those interests must be fully safeguarded and secured.

But in addition I wish to repeat this also. The relations between the Executive and the Legislature in this Country are well understood. In any circumstances it would be impossible for a Government to do anything with regard to this matter without the House of Commons having the fullest opportunity of discussion. In fact, nothing effective could be done without the positive approval of Parliament. So far as this House is concerned, as I have said, a unanimous expression of opinion has been made from every section of the House in the Debate this afternoon. . . . . .

No. 232 The German Ambassador in Paris to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Paris, December 10, 1938

On December 7, Mr. Duff Cooper gave a lecture in the *Théâtre des Ambassadeurs* in Paris on the subject of "Anglo-French Friendship and Peace." In the course of his remarks—which were of a war-mongering nature and directed throughout against Germany, at times even in an insulting manner—the speaker emphasized the necessity for an Anglo-French coalition for the safeguarding of the interests of both countries. He said that even though Germany was strong, these two peoples together were a match for her, and that there was absolutely no reason for the eventual outcome of any conflict to be in Germany's favor. Mr. Duff Cooper found consolation in stating that, in case of war, America, as the staunch friend of the Western Democracies, would back them up. A new war would place in the balance not so much the fate of Britain and France as the fate of civilization as a whole. All past civilizations, he asserted, with a subtle reference to Germany, had been destroyed by peoples who, although superior in numbers and in strength, were culturally inferior.

By Order

Bräuer

No. 233 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, January 5, 1939

I did not undertake the step advised in instructions until today, so that I might speak in person to Lord Halifax who, up to now, has been absent on Christmas leave. I protested very strongly against the grave insults to the Fuehrer and to leading German statesmen contained in Wells' article in the *News Chronicle*, and I pointed out that the Embassy during the past few months had unfortunately been forced to complain with increasing frequency about vilification of the Fuehrer. I reminded Lord Halifax of these complaints and their causes by quoting individual instances. The most serious affront of all was that which appeared in Wells' New Year's article in the *News Chronicle*, which not so much embodied criticism but abusive language aimed directly at the Fuehrer and his closest collaborators.

I said that I was aware that the British Government refused to entertain the possibility of bringing their influence to bear directly on the press, and that they had referred to the absence of a legal control. I added that I had noticed also that Wells had in neither of his articles refrained from derogatory criticism of the British King and Queen or from gross insults to Mr. Chamberlain.

I pointed out, however, that this did not alter the fact that the numerous defamations of the head of the German State and the impossibility of obtaining adequate satisfaction hurt German national feelings, and would have a detrimental effect on Anglo-German relations. I therefore wished once more to raise the question as to whether it would be possible to come to some arrangement which would improve matters, at least for the future.

Lord Halifax replied that he felt no hesitation in describing the article mentioned, which he had seen, as the most outrageous abuse of the Fuehrer that he had read in the press so far. He said that he wished to express to me his unbounded regret at this affront to the Fuehrer and begged me to convey to the German Government this expression of his regret. It was, he continued, extremely regrettable that during the last months numerous lapses had again occurred. Abusive articles such as the one under discussion could be explained, if not excused, by the fact that they were written chiefly for internal political reasons, and were aimed against the British Government. The general unsettled political atmosphere prevailing, he said, must also be taken into consideration.

I replied to Lord Halifax that the existing state of affairs could not continue, and that I must earnestly request him to find some means of bringing about an improvement, so that unpleasant political consequences might be avoided.

Lord Halifax promised to use whatever influence he had to prevent such insults to the Fuehrer in the future.

Dirksen

No. 234 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, January 9, 1939

President Roosevelt's message of January 4, in the first part of which he launched an attack against the totalitarian states, has been received by public opinion and by the press of all parties with overwhelming approval. Although the President did not actually name Germany, the papers here take it for granted that his attacks were primarily directed

against her. One cannot escape the impression that people over here note with great satisfaction that their powerful cousin across the sea has adopted a tone which they themselves would like to use sometimes, were it not that they haven't yet found the necessary courage. In the applause, there is an undertone of approval for Roosevelt's loyalty to the motto: "England expects every American to do his duty."

It was because he was fully aware of the reaction of British public opinion to the words of the American President that Mr. Chamberlain made his statement of approval. I hear from a reliable source that the Prime Minister himself, and not, as one might think, the Foreign Office, conceived the idea of this very unusual procedure. To be sure the statement was drawn up in the American Department of the Foreign Office.

Mr. Chamberlain's chief motives for this step may have been the following:—By adding his approval of the declaration made by the American President, to the unanimous approval of public opinion, the Prime Minister showed that his basic point of view was no different from the British public's, and that he was not afraid of giving utterance to it, even if it were bound to be interpreted abroad as being directed against the totalitarian states. By this step, Mr. Chamberlain has unquestionably strengthened his political position in his own country.

Moreover, Mr. Chamberlain's statement was a means of showing the American public, which is still inclined to moralize on the Munich Agreement, that he had had no alternative.

von Dirksen

No. 235 Speech by the Fuehrer at the New Year's Reception of the Diplomatic Corps, January 12, 1939

(Translation)

Monsignor,

Please accept my most sincere thanks for the New Year congratulations which your Excellency has expressed to me on behalf of the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Berlin and here assembled.

In your address, Monsignor, you referred particularly to the day when the representatives of the four Great Powers met in Munich. For me, too, when I review the past year, the memory of that event is of outstanding significance. The German nation remembers with deep gratitude that the year 1938 brought for our people the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination. If this has been attained without the peace of Europe having been disturbed for one single day, it is due to a large extent to the political wisdom and insight of those powers

whose policy found expression in the Munich Agreement. This is not the first occasion on which I have taken advantage of the New Year's celebration to express the gratitude which the German people feel toward those foreign statesmen who, in the year 1938, undertook, in collaboration with Germany, to seek and to find a way to a peaceful settlement of questions which could no longer be postponed. That it was possible to achieve the peaceful settlement so much desired by us all is due not only to a wish for peace and to a sense of responsibility on the part of the governments concerned, but more especially to the recognition of the fact that the nations' vital needs, arising from their historic development and natural requirements, must be acknowledged sooner or later, and cannot be ignored to the detriment of any particular people or state; still less can they be opposed by deeds of violence. From the recognition of this fact, the Powers concerned have drawn the inevitable conclusions as regards their political decisions, and have thus made a real contribution not only to the safeguarding of European peace but also to the creation of a sounder and a happier Europe. In my opinion this development justifies the hope—and in this I share your views, Monsignor—that in the future the insight of leading European statesmen will succeed in giving Europe a peace which will do the highest possible justice to the natural and legitimate claims of all peoples.

I heartily reciprocate the good wishes expressed by your Excellency for Germany as well as for me personally. My wishes are for the personal well-being of all the officials here represented, as well as for the welfare and prosperity of their countries.

No. 236 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Ankara to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Ankara, January 17, 1939

Sir Percy L. Loraine, the British Ambassador here since February 15, 1934, has been appointed British Ambassador in Rome, as the press has already reported. He will leave Ankara in about five or six weeks, and spend some time travelling before taking up his new post in April. The former British Ambassador to China, Sir Hughes Montgomery Knatchbull-Hugessen, K. C. M. G., has been appointed Sir Percy Loraine's successor.

Sir Percy Loraine has undoubtedly played an outstanding rôle during the five years of his activity here. He made it his aim to bind Turkish policy closely to England. Realizing that close economic collaboration was an indispensable prerequisite to the success of his aims, he has

striven persistently and perseveringly to promote England's economic influence in Turkey. Sir Percy Loraine believed that, in the long run, this could be achieved only by reducing German economic influence. Indeed, he has made every effort to undermine Germany's predominant economic position in Turkey.

Kroll

No. 237 Radio Address of Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, January 23, 1939

Extract

I want to speak to you tonight about the government scheme of voluntary national service, and about the handbook which will be delivered to all your homes next week.

But before I do so, I am going to say a few words about conditions which in our view make the scheme necessary for the security of the country.

It is a scheme to make us ready for war. That does not mean that I think war is coming. You know that I have done all I can to preserve peace for ourselves and for others, too.

We in this country would never begin a war. But we might be forced to take part in a war begun by others, or we might be attacked ourselves if the government of some other country were to think we could not defend ourselves effectively.

The better prepared we are to defend ourselves and to resist attack, the less likely it is that any aggressor will try an adventure in which the chances of success would be so unpromising. That is my first point.

My second point is this: Modern war is not like wars of the past. The development of air forces has deprived us of our old island security, and in our case, as in the case of Continental countries, the civilians would be the victims of an attack as much as soldiers, sailors and airmen. Indeed they might very likely be the first victims.

For that reason if we wish to protect our civilian population in time of war we must prepare necessary organization in time of peace. More than that, we must train it in peace, for there will be no time to train after war starts.

Therefore you will see that our scheme is just one of common prudence and just as necessary for our safety as battleships or guns or airplanes, though not meaning any more than they do that war is bound to come soon or even at all.

Now let me turn to the handbook which I hope you will all read very carefully when it comes, for its message concerns you all.

You will find in it a description of many forms of service which would be required for safety or the assistance of the public if our country were involved in war.

What we ask those of you to do who are ready to volunteer and are not already engaged in work essential to the country's security, which is itself a national service, is to choose one of these forms of service and to undertake the necessary training forthwith. I leave it to you to study these different forms of service and to decide, each of you, whether there is one for which you are fitted. The handbook will tell you about them simply and clearly, and it is not my purpose now to attempt to describe them. . . . . .

No. 238 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, January 25, 1939

I met Mr. Chamberlain yesterday at a social gathering. During a fairly long talk, he expressed to me his anxiety over the present state of tension in Europe. I replied that I had assumed that his conversation in Rome with Signor Mussolini would have convinced him of the peaceful intentions of at least Germany and Italy.

Chamberlain agreed, and pointed to the ending of the civil war in Spain, expressing the hope that it would eliminate a dangerous source of friction. But then he spoke again of his pessimistic impression of the present situation in Europe, and said that it would be of the utmost advantage if the Fuehrer and Chancellor were soon to state his views on the international situation in a reassuring fashion. I drew the Premier's attention to the fact that the Fuehrer had expressed himself in a definitely favorable manner, both in his New Year's Message and in his New Year's Address to the Diplomatic Corps,* and that he had mentioned both the Munich Conference and the statesmen who took part in it. Unfortunately, I said, this message was accorded hardly any notice in the British press. Chamberlain answered quickly that those officially concerned had given the addresses the attention that was due to them.

In conclusion, I indicated to Mr. Chamberlain that in order to achieve a general feeling of confidence, a similar attitude would also be necessary on the part of the British, particularly in the press. At the same time I reminded him that, only yesterday, the author, H. G. Wells, had renewed his outrageous insults against the Fuehrer in the *News Chron-*

* Cf. No. 235.

*icle.** Mr. Chamberlain regretted these attacks, and admitted that the *News Chronicle* was the most dangerous English newspaper.

Dirksen

No. 239 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, January 27, 1939

Sir Samuel Hoare made a speech yesterday in reply to numerous rumors that war is imminent. The Government intend energetically to refute these rumors. For several days the British public has been disturbed by rumors evidently originating from American and Jewish sources, which are passed along by word of mouth, and are given comparatively little notice in the press. I assume that behind these rumors are:

1. systematic American propaganda, and
2. large-scale bear operations on the Stock-Exchange.

Furthermore, Sir Samuel's speech is a concession to growing undercurrents of opinion among some members of the Conservative Party, who demand that the Government should have more backbone and adopt a more determined attitude towards the totalitarian states, since the milder tone used in the past has met with no success. I know from a reliable source that Mr. Chamberlain himself is being subjected to increasing pressure by this group. No doubt the Government, by adopting a more definite tone, also meant to provide an effective background for its National Service propaganda. Mr. Chamberlain has announced a political speech for tomorrow evening.

Dirksen

No. 240 Speech by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in Birmingham, January 28, 1939

Extract

. . . . . We cannot forget that though it takes at least two to make a peace, one can make a war. And until we have come to clear understandings in which all political tension is swept away we must put ourselves in a position to defend ourselves against attack, whether upon our land, our people or the principles of freedom with which our existence as a democracy is bound up and which to us seem to enshrine the highest attributes of human life and spirit.

* Cf. No. 233.

It is for this purpose, for the purpose of defense and not of attack, that we are pursuing the task of rearmament with unrelenting vigor and with the full approval of the country.

. . . . . But I cannot help once more registering my regret that it should be necessary to devote so much time and so vast a proportion of the revenue of the country to warlike preparations instead of to those more domestic questions which brought me into politics, the health and housing of the people, the improvement of their material conditions, the provision of recreation for their leisure and the prosperity of industry and agriculture.

None of these subjects is indeed being neglected, but their development is necessarily hampered and slowed up by the demands of national security.

Thinking over these things I recall the fate of one of the greatest of my predecessors, the younger Pitt. His interests, too, lay chiefly at home. He wanted to repair and to consolidate the national finances, which had been injured by the American war; he wanted to devote himself to domestic reforms. But events over which he had no control originating in the French Revolution cut short his ambitions and, reluctantly, in spite of many strenuous endeavors to avoid it, he found himself involved in what was up to then the greatest war in our history. In the end, as you know, success crowned the efforts of this country to which his own steadfast courage had so largely contributed. But he himself did not live to see the victory, for, worn out by the struggle, he died while the issue was still in doubt.

I trust that my lot may be happier than his and that we may yet secure our aim of international peace. We have so often defined our attitude that there can be no misunderstanding about it and I feel that it is time now that others should make their contribution to a result which would overflow with benefits to all. Today the air is full of rumors and suspicions which ought not to be allowed to persist.

For peace could only be endangered by such a challenge as was envisaged by the President of the United States in his New Year message, namely—by a demand to dominate the world by force. That would be a demand which, as the President indicated and I myself have plainly already declared, the democracies must inevitably resist. . . . . .

No. 241 Speech by the Fuehrer to the Reichstag, January 30, 1939

Extract

(Translation)

. . . . . In certain countries it is apparently one of the special prerogatives of politico-democratic life to cultivate an artificial hatred

of the so-called totalitarian states. A flood of reports, partly misrepresentations of the facts, partly pure invention, has been let loose to stir up public opinion against nations which have done nothing to harm other nations, have no desire to harm them, and which, indeed, have been for years the victims of harsh injustice.

When we defend ourselves against such agitators as Mr. Duff Cooper, Mr. Eden, Mr. Churchill or Mr. Ickes and the rest, our action is denounced as an encroachment on the sacred rights of the democracies. According to the way these agitators see things, they are entitled to attack other nations and their governments, but no one is entitled to defend himself against such attacks.

I need hardly assure you that so long as the German Reich continues to be a sovereign state, its government will not consent to be forbidden by any English or American politician to reply to such attacks. And that we shall remain a sovereign state for all time is guaranteed by the arms that we are forging and the friends that we are choosing.

The assertion that Germany was planning to attack America can be disposed of with a mere laugh. And we prefer to pass over in silence the incessant agitations of certain British war-mongers. But we must not forget this:

1. Owing to the political structure of these democratic states it is possible that a few months hence these war-mongers may themselves be in the government.

2. We therefore owe it to the security of the Reich to bring home to the German people in good time the truth about these men. The German nation has no feeling of hatred for England, America or France: all it wants is peace and quiet. But these other nations are continually being stirred up to hatred of Germany and the German people by agitators, Jewish and otherwise. And so, should the war-mongers achieve what they are aiming at, our own people would face a situation for which they would be psychologically quite unprepared, and which they would fail to grasp.

I therefore consider it necessary that, from now on, our propaganda and our press should always make a point of answering these attacks, and above all bring them to the notice of the German people. The German nation must know who the men are who want to bring about a war by hook or by crook. It is my conviction that these people are mistaken in their calculations, for when once National-Socialist propaganda begins to answer their attacks, we shall succeed just as we succeeded inside Germany in overcoming the Jewish world-enemy through the convincing power of our propaganda. The nations will in a short time realize that National-Socialist Germany wants no enmity with other nations; that all the asser-

tions as to our aggressive intentions towards other nations are lies—lies born of morbid hysteria, or of a mania for self-preservation on the part of certain politicians; that in certain states these lies are being used by unscrupulous profiteers to salvage their own finances; that, above all, international Jewry is hoping by these lies to satisfy its thirst for revenge and its greed; that on the other hand this is the grossest defamation which can be levelled at a great and peace-loving nation.

. . . . . National-Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy are strong enough to safeguard peace against anyone and to end resolutely and successfully any conflict which irresponsible elements may lightly start.

This does not mean that we desire war, as is daily asserted by an irresponsible press—it simply means that we

1. appreciate the fact that other nations, too, desire to assure themselves of that share of the world's goods which is their due, by virtue of their number, their courage and their value, and that we
2. are determined, in recognition of these rights, to give our joint support to our joint interests; above all, however, that we shall never under any circumstances yield to threats bordering on extortion!

. . . . . Germany has no territorial claims on England and France except the return of her colonies.

While the solution of this question would contribute greatly to the pacification of the world, it is in no sense a problem which in itself could cause a war. If there is any tension in Europe today, it is primarily due to the irresponsible activity of an unscrupulous press, which scarcely permits a day to go by without disturbing the peace of mankind through alarmist news, as stupid as it is mendacious. The efforts of various organs to poison the mind of the world in this connection must be regarded as nothing short of criminal. Recently, endeavors have been made to place broadcasting, too, in the service of this international attempt to stir up strife.

. . . . . For in what way, for instance, do the interests of Great Britain and Germany clash? I have stated often enough that there is no German, and above all no National-Socialist, who even in his most secret thoughts has the intention of causing the British Empire any kind of difficulties. From Great Britain, too, are heard the voices of men who think reasonably and calmly, expressing a similar attitude with regard to Germany. It would be a blessing for the whole world if mutual confidence and cooperation could be established between the two peoples. The same is true of our relations with France. . . . . .

No. 242 Speech by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in Blackburn, February 22, 1939

Extract

. . . . . When huge armaments are being piled up on every hand we cannot avoid a certain anxiety lest some incident, perhaps trifling in itself, should set in motion the machinery that would bring them into operation. We know that if that dread event should come to pass there is none of us or of those who are dearest to us who could count on escaping the consequences. In such conditions it seems to me that only the reckless, the irresponsible, or the ignorant can desire that the Government of the day should follow any other policy than the one we have laid down for ourselves, a policy of peace through strength, which will neglect no opportunity of breaking down suspicions and antagonisms and at the same time will build up steadily and resolutely, with the help of our friends within and without the Empire, a strength so formidable as to maintain our rights and liberties against any who might be rash enough to attack them.

During the last two days we have been discussing in the House of Commons the progress of our rearmament. The figures are indeed staggering. Perhaps they have got so big that people have ceased to be able to take them in. But I must try to give you some idea of the size and pace of our rearmament as measured by the cost.

During the first five years of National Government, 1931 to 1935, the average expenditure on the Defense Services was £114,000,000, but in 1936 it was £186,000,000, in 1937 it was £265,000,000, in 1938 the estimated expenditure was £406,000,000 and the Estimates for the next financial year, including expenditure on civilian defense, have actually jumped up to £580,000,000. No one deplores the necessity for this expenditure more than I do, and yet I say you are right to cheer it. For you can draw one or two comforting conclusions from these huge figures which can at any rate be set off against the rather discomforting process of paying the bill.

In the first place you can see for yourselves that whatever cause for concern there may have been in the past on the score of delay in the production of armaments, that source of anxiety is being rapidly overcome. Ships, guns, aeroplanes, and munitions are now pouring out of yards and factories in a stream which is constantly increasing in volume, and the position today, even as compared with a few months ago, has been enormously strengthened.

. . . . . Now let me return to the defense estimates and to the more comforting conclusions that can be drawn from them. I have already pointed out their significance in showing the progress of our armament program. But in the second place these huge figures will serve to bring home to us all the immensity of our financial resources, which en-

able us not only to find such colossal sums but to contemplate their expenditure without any appreciable disturbance in the confidence which is the basis of our financial credit.

And when we reflect that what we are now considering is the effort of this country alone, without taking any account of the contribution that could be made, if need arose, by the great Dominions or by our allies and friends outside the British Empire, we may well feel that, to quote our own Shakespeare,

Come the three corners of the world in arms
And we shall shock them.

No. 243 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, February 24, 1939

1. Before my departure I had a thorough discussion with Lord Halifax on the general situation, about which I shall later make oral report. Halifax mentioned by the various Anglo-German economic talks now proceeding which, he hoped, would be furthered by the visit of Mr. Ashton-Gwatkin and Mr. Stanley.

2. I drew attention to the state of nervousness prevailing among the general public here, which had been increased by propaganda, and had only been temporarily allayed after the Fuehrer's speech. This atmosphere was detrimental to our mutual relations.

Lord Halifax agreed that there had been a state of nervousness in January, but did not think that a new wave of apprehension had seized the general public after the Fuehrer's speech.

3. I then described how seriously this general atmosphere affected the situation of German nationals living in Great Britain, who even experienced difficulty in holding assemblies because they were refused the necessary meeting places.

Dirksen

No. 244 The German Consul in Geneva to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Geneva, February 24, 1939

The Secretariate of the League of Nations announced a few days ago that the British as well as the French Governments had sent notes to the

Secretariate of the League of Nations, according to which both Governments declare themselves bound for a further period of five years by the General Act which expires on August 16, 1939. This declaration of adherence on the part of the British and French Governments, however, was made only with a very noteworthy reservation, which runs as follows:

> "Dé sormais la dite adhésion ne s'étendra pas aux différences relatives à des évènements qui viendraient à se produire au cours d'une guerre dans laquelle il serait impliqué."
>
> (In future the said obligation shall not apply to disputes relating to incidents which may occur in the course of a war in which they are involved.)

It is significant that this limitation of the sphere of application of the General Act made by Great Britain and France was given no prominence in either the British or French press, and was only briefly mentioned in the rest of the international press. In the German press this incident has been mainly interpreted as an indication that even Great Britain and France are now abandoning the methods of the Geneva institution, and are limiting the use of arbitration within a certain class of important international disputes.

However, the principal importance of the Anglo-French reservation regarding the application of the General Act lies in the fact that both governments desire to ensure themselves a completely free hand in dealing with neutral countries in the event of war, and refuse to submit to arbitrating any disputes arising out of the interpretation of the neutrality laws in general, and out of the regulations governing the conduct of maritime warfare in particular. This attitude of the British and French Governments can also be interpreted as a measure directed against the withdrawal of neutral states from the policy of sanctions, and in any case will seriously weaken the position of the neutral states in the event of war.

Experts in the Geneva delegations are fully aware of the grave importance of the Anglo-French reservation in respect to the General Act. A delegate from a neutral state, for instance, spoke to me of his serious apprehension regarding this "preparedness measure", which evidently emanated from Great Britain and reminded him directly of the negative attitude adopted by the British Government before the Great War, toward the submission of disputes with neutral states about contraband to an international prize-court. At the same time he mentioned, by way of example, the great significance of the Anglo-French reservation for those Mediterranean states who would wish to remain neutral in the event of war in that part of the world.

Krauel

No. 245 The German Minister in Teheran to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Teheran, March 4, 1939

For several months increasing political activity on the part of Great Britain has been observed here, directed in no small measure against Germany and our position in Iran.

Only a year ago there were but slight indications here of any overt British activity in political, economic or cultural spheres. An attentive observer could not but gain the impression that Britain, whose foreign policy in former years had displayed marked activity especially in this part of the world, was now exhibiting pronounced reserve, though still attentively watching the progress of affairs in this rapidly developing state. Nor did this reserve undergo any apparent change when other European powers, particularly Germany, began to pay marked attention to the new Iran, and to consolidate and to develop their relations with this country, especially in an economic direction. It was further accepted with equanimity that within a few years Germany should have moved up from the fifth to the second place as buyer and seller in Iran, while Great Britain, which in 1936-37 still occupied the second place, was now relegated to the fourth. Even the establishment of a German air route to the Near East met at first with only slight opposition on the part of Great Britain, though it extended to Afghanistan, almost to the Indian frontier, and was originally planned to permit a further extension to China, which would provide for ports of call in important British spheres of interest in Central Asia. The relations between the German and the British diplomatic missions, as well as the personal relations between German and British nationals resident here, were as friendly as they could possibly be, and expressions of sympathy and admiration for the new Germany could often be heard in British circles.

The return of Austria to the Reich, received here with evident uneasiness, caused the first chill in these relations. While the diplomatic missions of other countries expressed their satisfaction at the fact that one section of a nation had been reunited with another, and that a serious menace to European peace had thus been removed without bloodshed, severe criticism of the methods adopted by Germany was expressed in British circles, and thence spread further, even to high Government authorities. The solution of the Sudeten German problem, that acid test for the Berlin-Rome axis, as well as the great success of German statesmanship shown in the result of the Munich negotiations and recognized throughout the world, called forth in British circles here an attitude definitely hostile to Germany; an attitude quite frankly expressed by the

staff of the Embassy, from the minister down, despite the proper tone of our conversations.

Since then, the anti-German sentiment prevailing in British circles here has increased considerably. The British legation and the British colony are becoming a center of war psychosis, which throws its web far beyond the actual domain of British interests. The whole current rearmament propaganda, as it manifests itself today in the British press, over the radio, in public speeches by spokesmen of the war-party—this whole anti-German front finds its exact counterpart in the British legation and colony here. If, in the course of conversations with British people, attention is attracted to the reprehensible and dangerous character of these methods, the only answer is a deprecating shrug of the shoulders or a frigid reply that the armaments race between the nations is bound to end in war some day. Messrs. Eden, Churchill, and Duff Cooper appear to these people as the real representatives and the future leaders of the British nation.

The effects which this propaganda, so unmistakably anti-German, must have on our work and our position in Iran, should not be underrated. The British, being feared but by no means loved in these parts, will not find it so easy to endanger our favorable position in economic and cultural spheres; but nevertheless, by creating a war psychosis in leading Iranian circles, they will manage to produce a sense of insecurity and apprehension of things to come. This may have disturbing and detrimental effects on the willingness of the Iran Government to enter upon important and long-term economic or transport undertakings with us.

In many other respects, too, the British have recently exhibited a marked anti-German activity. Thus, any new German business enterprise in Iran is not only subject to espionage in every detail, now-a-days, to the espionage of an excellently organized news service—but is also sabotaged wherever possible.

Smend

No. 246 Speech by Mr. Hore-Belisha, British Secretary of State for War, in the House of Commons, March 8, 1939

Extract

I recognize that this year the question uppermost in the mind of the House is to what extent we should be prepared, in the event of war, to intervene with land forces on the Continent of Europe.

. . . . . From the strategic reserve in the United Kingdom is drawn the field force, now both Regular and Territorial, for the Territorial part is now, as I am able to inform the House, by a recent Government deci-

sion, being prepared, trained and equipped to meet the event of war in a European theatre. I will refer in the first place, to the Regular part. The new structure of the infantry divisions and of the units which compose them has now been completed on the lines which I foreshadowed a year ago. Every fighting arm of the Service has been remodelled. War establishments and war equipment tables have been fixed and issued to enable a rapid mobilization. So complete an overhaul as that to which the Army has been subjected has been a formidable task, and the General Staff point out to me that the changes made in one year would normally have taken many to accomplish.

. . . . . It will now be convenient to appraise the dimensions of the field force. The whole, or any part of it, will be used, of course, as and how the future may require, but this is the size of the instrument our plans are shaping: Regular, four infantry divisions and two armored divisions; Territorial, nine infantry divisions, three motorized divisions and an armored division. In addition, there are two Territorial cavalry brigades, and a number of unbrigaded units, Regular and Territorial—making more than 19 divisions in all. Mr. Haldane projected a field force of six Regular divisions and one cavalry division only. He had not equipped the Territorial force for a European war. Our Territorial Army will be so equipped.

. . . . . I am talking only of the field force formed from our own strategic reserves in this country. Mr. Haldane obtained his field force only by transferring Home Defence to the Territorial force. We, in our turn, have transferred this defence to what I have called a new anti-aircraft and coast defence army—seven divisions strong, as it will be. They will repel invasion by sea and air. Other units at home, Regular and Auxiliary, will be available to assist the population in the event of air attack.

. . . . . My right hon. friend, the Prime Minister, made on December 13th last* a declaration, which he reinforced on February 11th this year,** leaving in no doubt the position which, in certain eventualities, Great Britain would assume. On the latter occasion he said that he felt "bound to make it plain that the solidarity of interest by which France and this country are united is such that any threat to the vital interests of France, from whatever quarter it came, must evoke the immediate co-operation of this country."

. . . . . My right hon. friend's declaration of the solidarity of our interest with France is of greater significance than any which have preceded it. It makes it incumbent on us to consider and to prepare for the use of the field force in certain eventualities. Conversations between ourselves and the French have not committed us in this respect, but

* On December 13, 1938, Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in a speech to the Foreign Journalists' Association in London declared that the relations between Britain and France were so close that they went beyond mere treaty obligations as they were based on identity of interests.

** He is probably referring to the statement made by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons on February 6, 1939. Cf. No. 267.

prudent minds should be ready for any eventuality. If we are involved in war, our contribution and the ways in which we can best make it will not be half-hearted, nor upon any theory of limited liability.

No. 247 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, March 18, 1939

On the occasion of my protest today against the vilification of the Fuehrer by Mr. Duff Cooper, M. P., I made the following statements to Lord Halifax:—

I had repeatedly been obliged to complain of grave aspersions on the character of the Fuehrer. These insults had been uttered in the press, and I had been told that the British Government regretted these disparagements and would try to exercise a restraining influence on the press. Their powers in this respect, however, were limited; they had no legal weapon against the organs of the press, consequently it was impossible really to put a stop to such attacks. I therefore confined myself to pointing out that the Fuehrer had been variously and gravely insulted in the press during the last few days.

But the case of Duff Cooper was a different matter. In that instance, a member of Parliament, speaking before the House of Commons, had abused the Fuehrer in the vilest manner, without the Speaker's interfering, and without a word of expostulation against such language from any member of the Government. I was aware that the House of Commons possessed no written rules of order, such as other Parliaments have, but that its proceedings were governed by customary usage (*Gewohnheitsrecht*). But I could not refrain from pointing out that according to a newspaper notice, Erskine May, the well-known authority on constitutional law, had stated that disparaging remarks about Heads of foreign States should not be made.

To this Lord Halifax answered that, as regards Mr. Cooper, he had also been attacked by the Fuehrer, who had called him a warmonger. It was therefore comprehensible that, having been attacked, he should retaliate. The usage of the House was such that it had not been possible for members of the Government to intervene and repudiate such attacks. The Speaker was a law unto himself, and directions about the manner in which he should conduct his office could not be entertained.

I then asked Lord Halifax if the British Government now took the attitude that the Heads of foreign States were, so to speak, fair game.

The Foreign Secretary replied that he had not intended to express such a view.

I then remarked to Lord Halifax that it was impossible to place Duff Cooper on a level with the Fuehrer; the fundamental difference in their positions forbade that. Moreover, the Fuehrer had never abused Cooper, he had merely justifiably reproached him for pursuing a policy that must lead to war. As Cooper had resigned his position in the Cabinet on the grounds that he could not participate in Mr. Chamberlain's policy for the maintenance of peace, the Fuehrer's attacks had merely contained a presentation of existing facts.

It seemed to me surprising, I said, that Lord Halifax had not been able to give me a satisfactory explanation. Britain in particular had no grounds for complaint about our attitude with regard to discussing the Head of the State in the daily press. This was evidenced by the discretion our press had shown during the abdication of the King's predecessor. Not even the leading statesmen of the present or of any preceding Government had been attacked by Germans in official positions, still less abused.

Lord Halifax was obliged to admit this. He stated that he would make a report to the Prime Minister.

I replied that I, too, would give my Government a report of the course of the conversation.

von Dirksen

No. 248 Statement Made by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, March 29, 1939

Extract

. . . . . The House will remember that in a recent statement I announced that every aspect of our national life including the National Defense program would be examined anew. In the course of this review His Majesty's Government have been impressed with the need for availing themselves still further of the spirit of voluntary service which is manifest throughout the country. In particular they feel that they cannot allow would-be recruits for the Territorial Army to be refused because the units to which they apply are already over strength. Accordingly they have given consideration to the position and have come to the following conclusions:

I. The Territorial Field Army which is now on a peace establishment of 130,000 men will be raised forthwith to war strength which will involve an addition of about 40,000 men to this figure.

II. The Territorial Field Army so brought up to war strength will be doubled and will, therefore, be allotted an establishment of 340,000 men. . . . .

Mr. Bellenger: Will this increase make any difference to the plans recently outlined by the Secretary of State for War* as to the number of divisions which are to be held in readiness as overseas forces if necessary?

The Prime Minister: The announcement which I have made will double the number of divisions that will in time be available.

No. 249 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, April 6, 1939

When a film was shown on board the British aircraft carrier, *Ark Royal,* on the evening of April 4 of this year, Earl Stanhope, the First Lord of the Admiralty, pointed to a row of empty seats, and remarked: "Shortly before I left the Admiralty, it was necessary to give orders to man the anti-aircraft guns of the Royal Navy; this accounts for the empty seats." Later on Lord Stanhope explained to a reporter that the fleet was preparing for all contingencies and was in constant readiness.

In consequence of representations by the Admiralty, a so-called "D-note" was issued, stating that it would not be in the national interest to make Lord Stanhope's speech public. Only a part of the morning press then published Lord Stanhope's speech in a sensational form. The *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* abstained from any reference.

The remarks of the First Lord of the Admiralty created a considerable stir in the House of Commons, as well as in editorial offices. It is said that Lord Stanhope offered his resignation to the Prime Minister, but that the latter did not accept it.

During the sitting of the House of Commons on the 5th inst., the Deputy-Leader of the opposition, Mr. Greenwood, asked the Prime Minister whether he could offer an explanation of the Government's official request to the press not to publish the Admiralty order mentioned by Lord Stanhope in his speech.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the speech had been delivered at a meeting held for the purpose of organizing moving-picture performances aboard warships. Lord Stanhope's words had been unpremeditated. He had pointed out that there was not a full attendance as some of the men were retained on board their own ships. They were held in readiness to man their guns, a perfectly normal precaution in time of tension. No other orders had been given by the Admiralty than that this practice should not be relaxed even on so special an occasion.

The Prime Minister added that he had given directions to the press not to publish the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty, or if they

* Cf. No. 246.

did publish it, not to ascribe to it any particular importance. His efforts to spare the public unnecessary agitation had not been altogether successful. The incident, however, had served to demonstrate the constant readiness of the Navy. Lord Stanhope had told him that he regretted that his words, which perhaps were not very happily chosen, should have given rise to so much comment. But he, the Prime Minister, did not think that such an incident affected the general efficiency of Lord Stanhope as Head of the Admiralty.

With this statement the incident was closed for the time being.

The Admiralty's order to the Navy is only explicable in the light of the multitude of rumors and sensational reports current here, and the excessive nervousness they have excited. It is astonishing, however, that the First Lord of the Admiralty should be capable of such remarks, which unqestionably constitute a "boner" of the first order. It is not the first time that Lord Stanhope's ill-considered utterances have created an inconvenient public sensation.

The Leftist press has taken advantage of the incident, primarily to inveigh against the so-called "D-notes" as an institution. The prevailing view is that an editor who takes no notice of such a "D-note" can in certain circumstances be prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act. But now that the Admiralty have suppressed a speech by their own chief, on the publication of which he himself had imposed no restrictions, the press is demanding that "D-notes" should no longer be regarded as official prohibitions.

By Order

von Selzam

No. 250 Statement Made by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, April 20, 1939

Mr. White asked the Prime Minister whether he is now in a position to make any further statement with regard to the policy of His Majesty's Government in relation to a Ministry of Supply?

The Prime Minister: His Majesty's Government have decided that a Bill should be introduced as soon as possible to set up a Ministry of Supply under a Minister who will be a member of the Cabinet. The Bill introduced to give effect to this decision will be so framed as to enable a Ministry of Supply in the full sense to be set up. For the time being, however, the scope of the new Ministry will be confined by administrative action to the following matters:

(1) It will deal with the problems of Army Supply, considerably expanded as they have been by the recent decisions to increase the strength of the Army;

(2) The Ministry will take over responsibility for certain stores of general uses which the War Office at present already supplies to other Government Departments, including certain Civil Defense requirements. It is intended that this system should be progressively extended as found desirable;

(3) The new Ministry will also take over responsibility for the acquisition and maintenance of the reserves of essential metals and other raw materials required in connection with the Defense program.

The branches to be transferred from the War Office to the new Ministry will include the branches responsible for research, design and experiment, production and inspection, and the Royal Ordinance Factories.

The Bill to be laid before Parliament will, among other things, include provisions designed to secure priority for Government orders.

It is proposed to establish a Ministerial Priority Committee on the lines of the committee which towards the end of the last War performed the duty of settling questions of priority resulting from demands from the several Services.

With the approval of the King, I am able to announce that the Minister in charge of the new Department will be my right hon. Friend the present Minister of Transport.

No. 251 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, April 26, 1939

The British Ambassador left the accompanying Aide-Mémoire with me today, when he called to inform me of Mr. Chamberlain's impending declaration in the house of Commons, concerning the introduction of conscription.

Weizsäcker

Appendix

Aide-Mémoire

The Prime Minister will be asked in the House of Commons on April 26th, whether he has any further statement to make as to the intentions of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to ensure that Great Britain is maintained in a state of preparedness and in a condition to give effect to the new undertakings recently announced.

In reply the Prime Minister will say that His Majesty's Government have recently had under review arrangements for the calling up for service of members of the Navy, Army and Air Force Reserves and for the calling up of the Territorial Army. This is a matter which has been under consideration for some time. The present arrangements are based upon statutes in force for many years and they are unsuited to modern conditions.

Accordingly it has been decided to introduce a bill to simplify the procedure for the calling up of these reserves and auxiliary forces with a view to avoiding the present cumbrous procedure. It is a part of that procedure that proclamations have to be issued declaring that a state of emergency exists. It is obviously desirable, if possible, to avoid disturbance to public confidence in Great Britain and elsewhere which necessarily results from such a declaration. The procedure now proposed will bring His Majesty's Government's arrangements into line with those in force in European countries generally.

The Prime Minister will go on to announce the intention to introduce a second bill providing for a measure of compulsory military training. The decision to introduce this Bill is due very largely to a change in public opinion which has developed steadily for some considerable time. There has been widespread expression of feeling that a more general system of training than is afforded by the Territorial Army is in itself desirable. The Bill will provide for the calling up of men between the ages of twenty and twenty-one for a period of training followed by a period of service in the Territorial forces or in the supplementary reserve. The intention is that the power to call up these men will not extend beyond the next three years, unless at the end of that time (when experience will of course have been gained of the working of the scheme) Parliament should so decide.

In explaining the reasons for the introduction of this Bill, the statement on behalf of His Majesty's Government will naturally refer to the new liabilities which Great Britain has incurred recently in Europe. It will be pointed out that the object of the assurances which we have given to certain countries as well as of the conversations now proceeding with other Governments is not to wage war, but to prevent it. It is felt that His Majesty's Government's ability to play their part in the world is weakened, so long as they leave defence entirely to a voluntary system, more especially as compulsory military service is the universal rule on the Continent.

On the other hand the introduction of this measure is not intended to represent any general departure from the voluntary system which has served so well. The voluntary principle will continue for recruitment for the Navy, Regular Army, Air Force and Territorials, as well as for National Service.

British Embassy, Berlin, April 26, 1939.

No. 252 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, July 10, 1939

The campaign of hate against Germany roused by the *coup* that Germany is alleged to be planning against Danzig, has subsided after a few days by reason of its mendacity.

This in itself should mark the close of this latest chapter in the efforts of our enemies to involve Germany in a world war, but the last few days have revealed a state of public feeling in Britain which deserves serious attention.

Public opinion here, which is always susceptible to emotional appeals, has reached a point at which people think and talk of nothing but "war." A number of factors have contributed to this; namely, the Government's anti-German encirclement policy, rearmament propaganda, the introduction of conscription, the organization of air defense and, above all, the flood of anti-German propaganda in press, cinema, theatre and wireless. The only question on which some slight difference of opinion exists is whether war is inevitable or not. The average Englishman is guided by his feelings and thinks it is, but the more thoughtful minority answers "No," perceiving that the existing relations between Germany and England are such that, with good will, it should be possible to settle all questions at issue, and that even a victorious war would profit no one. But even these essentially sensible circles are influenced by the knowledge of the measures taken by Great Britain's armed forces:—full preparedness of the fleet by the end of July; completion of military training and organization measures by the same date. Press reports that Germany is contemplating military measures for August tend to have the same effect. In any case, it is anticipated in responsible and serious quarters that August will prove a critical period of the first order.

The attitude of the public toward "War" as a general concept differs. The emotional reaction of a small section of the British public suggests hysteria. The people in this group are ready to believe any sensational report. They call for Polish and Russian help, thereby weakening the tactical position of the Government in the negotiations with Russia. The majority, however, adopts a more manly attitude and says, "If war is really and truly inevitable, let us wage it with resolution, and the sooner the better, because then we can get it over and settle down again." Press reports from Germany that the Fuehrer has returned to Berchtesgaden, that the German Foreign Minister and General von Brauchitsch have gone on leave, and that army leave is being granted, have not effected any fundamental change in the prevailing mood of excitement.

In summing up, it may be stated that anti-German feeling is growing, and that readiness to fight grows more pronounced. The feeling is gaining ground among the people that they must not put up with anything further, that their honor is at stake, that they would have to fight, and that the Government must not give in again.

The essential difference between the mood of the British in the autumn of 1938 and their present mood is that at that time the bulk of the people did not want to fight, and were passive, whereas now they have taken the initiative out of the Government's hands and are forcing them forward. However unfounded and dangerous this attitude of the British public may be, it is real and must be taken seriously, all the more so in a country in which public opinion plays such a decisive rôle as it does in England.

von Dirksen

No. 253 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, July 24, 1939

After the *Sunday Times* had drawn attention to the plan alleged to have been submitted to State Councillor Wohltat, today's morning papers, with the exception of *The Times,* give great publicity to alleged statements of Hudson concerning his conversations with Wohltat.

The information so far received regarding Mr. Hudson's activities permits us to draw the conclusion that opponents of any kind of understanding with Germany considered that the time had come to spread fantastic ideas which would nip in the bud any possibility of constructive development. The gossiping tendencies of Hudson, who has an almost pathological urge to make himself important, have given war-mongering correspondents and those who egg them on (certain personages in the Foreign Office, such as Winston Churchill and his son, Randolph) an opportunity to spread tendentious reports throughout the world.

Dirksen

No. 254 Speech by Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for the Home Department, in the House of Commons, July 28, 1939

Extract

. . . . . What we are trying to do is to extend British culture abroad and to explain British policy abroad in peace-time. Secondly, we are at-

tempting to organize in peace-time a shadow Ministry of Information that will have no operation or activity in peace-time but, if war came, would be the center of information both for home and overseas. Hon. Members will see that these two objectives, the peace-time activities of the Foreign Office and the war-time activities of the Ministry of Information—are very closely connected. In any planning it is essential that the transition from the peace-time conditions to the war-time conditions should be made as easy and as efficient as possible. In the event of war, the Ministry of Information, as I see it, would become the center of information, and the Foreign Office activities would be taken over by it. In those circumstances, it is essential that in peace-time there should be the closest possible liaison between the two activities. That is the reason why we have designated the same officials to be the secretary and chief official in the publicity department in peace-time and the secretary-general of the Ministry of Information in war-time.

Carrying the matter a step further, I think hon. Members will see that, while there is this very close liaison between the two activities, there are, none the less, two very definite differences between the work of the Foreign Office in peace-time and the work of the shadow Ministry of Information in war-time. The first great difference is that the Foreign Office is actually working here and now, in peace-time, whereas there is no intention at all of the Ministry of Information operating in peace-time.

. . . . . The second difference between these peace-time and war-time activities is that the peace-time activities are essentially for the foreign front: they do not deal with the home front at all; whereas, to take the experience of the last War, the greater part of the activities of the then Ministry of Information was on the home front. As, in times of peace, the sole activities of a Ministry of Information are on the foreign front, it is obvious that the Foreign Secretary must be the Minister exclusively responsible for those activities.

. . . . . Let me pass from these general observations to the actual votes. I will begin by repeating what is our objective. It is to diffuse British culture abroad and to explain the British outlook abroad. Both of these needs are very urgent, in view of the great mass of misrepresentation, with which the world has been flooded. I wish that there had been no necessity for any Government publicity anywhere in the world. I still look forward to living long enough to see an end of this objectionable relic of the years of the War, but, as long as unscrupulous statements are diffused about our policy and our general outlook, it is regrettably inevitable that we should have an organization capable of countering them, and countering them effectively. It is important also, it seems to me, to explain to the world what, in my view, is the greatest experiment in constitutional development which the world has ever seen, namely, the British Commonwealth of free nations.

Lastly, it is necessary to give the world an accurate picture of what we are actually achieving here at the present time. I claim that it is a very remarkable thing that here in recent times, as the result of a nation-wide effort, we have been going on step by step with our great rearmament program and at the same time have not had to abandon our social progress, nor have we, except for this very rare instance of the terrorist emergency, had to relinquish any of our individual liberties. That is a very fine record. It is a record that it is our duty to tell definitely, dispassionately, and without exaggeration to the whole world. These being our objectives, I invite the Committee to look at the actual details of the work that is being done to achieve them. . . . . .

I begin with the Foreign Office. The first sum for which we ask authority today is a sum of £10,000 for increased staff for the Foreign Office Publicity Department. That is a need that is very essential to be worked. The Foreign Office Publicity Department has been heavily overworked in recent months. It has been criticized, I know, from time to time, and I should like to take this opportunity of paying tribute to the work that it has done in the past with an inadequate staff and under very great difficulties. This addition to the staff will help it to extend and to improve its activities. There is a sum of £100,000 for various publicity activities —the preparation of literature, films, the arrangement of foreign visits to this country and of British visits to foreign countries—both of them very important for extending knowledge of the British outlook—and the preparation of exhibitions. . . . . There are also preparations for speakers and increased activities for broadcasting.

Next there is an additional sum of £150,000 for the British Council. Every hon. Member realizes the value of the work of the British Council, which has been presided over so actively and energetically by Lord Lloyd in the last 12 or 18 months. In fact, it has been so successful that its activities must be extended. The object of all these activities is, as I say, to give a picture of this country to the outside world that is intelligible, convincing and definite, so that the world may know that there is a distinctly British point of view, and that it must be explained to the world at large.

Lastly, I turn from the Foreign Office activities to the vote for the Ministry of Information, and here in a sentence or two let me tell the Committee why it is that we require money now for an organization which will operate only in war time. First of all, we need the staff for the planning of this Ministry. If hon. Members will turn their minds back to the history of the Ministry of Information in war time, they will remember that it became a very big and comprehensive department covering a very wide field, and engaged in activities of many different kinds, and it is obvious to me that if there were a major war, an organization upon much the same lines would be necessary—an organization of great

scope, with a large and comprehensive personnel. If that is so, it is obvious that a war time Ministry needs a great deal of very careful planning, and accordingly we have had in recent months a number of Civil servants seconded for full time for the planning of this work. Indeed, we shall want more of them before our plans are complete. (These officials are whole-time officials, and they are civil servants seconded from other Departments for this work).

Secondly, it is vitally important that we should make many contacts with the outside world, to make sure that, if the emergency came, we should be able to enlist to our aid men and women of many opinions, some of them experts in publicity of various kinds, with whose help we could create the kind of Ministry of Information that would be needed both for the foreign and home fronts. We have during the last few months made many contacts with the outside world. We have also engaged a number of experts to make specific inquiries. For instance, there has been a number of experts making detailed preparations for contacts in foreign countries, and, as far as the home front is concerned, we have made contacts with the representatives of the principal organs of publicity. For instance, with the press. I have been in constant contact with representatives of the press, and at their suggestion they have set up a contact committee which has been dealing with me and other departments upon a number of technical questions, including the question of newsprint in war time, the question of distribution and the question of labor. And I think that I can tell Hon. Members that we have made great progress with our discussions, and we have now, speaking generally, reached a basis of agreement that, if the emergency did come, the press side of the organization would be able to operate quickly and efficiently.

Sir Richard Acland: The use of the word "emergency" is used by the Minister in this Debate as meaning war. There might be a distinction raised between emergency in peace time and war.

Sir S. Hoare: I mean actual war. This is a war time organization, and it will have to be set up as a formal body by war time legislation, presumably carried in the early days of the war.

To come back to the questions of contacts. I have given the press as an illustration. I have had a number of discussions with the representatives of the press on the very important question of press censorship in war time, and I have taken the view that in all this planning we ought to take very full account of the lessons that we learned from the Ministry of Information between 1914 and 1918. As a matter of fact, I am receiving very valuable assistance from the gentleman who was Secretary of the Department at that time. It seems to me that one of the lessons that we ought to learn is the danger of having a press censorship detached from the Ministry, operating in some isolated position outside, and that it is much better, if there is to be a press censorship, as quite obviously there

must be, that it should be worked as part of the Ministry of Information and should be worked upon the basis of co-operation between the press and the Censorship Department in the Ministry of Information. Accordingly, we are working out with the press—and we have gone a long way towards reaching an agreement in the matter—a plan of a co-operation which, while it would maintain the ultimate control and security in the hands of the Minister of Information, and put definite responsibility upon the press and, as far as possible, leave the press with considerable latitude in dealing with press affairs, and would intervene only in questions of emergency, or with an individual newspaper, which was abusing these powers of latitude.

As with other organs of publicity, so also with the films. We have many contacts with the representatives of the film world. I do not want to be drawn into details today upon what the preparations are that we have made, but I can tell hon. Members that those preparations are very far advanced to ensure supply of the kind of film that would be needed in war time. A third organ of publicity is the wireless. The plan would be not that the Government would take over the B. B. C. in wartime, but, on the whole, the wise course would be to treat broadcasting as we treat the other methods of publicity, the press and the films, and to leave the B. B. C. to carry on, but, obviously, in war time, with a very close liaison between the Ministry of Information and the Broadcasting Corporation, with definite regulations as to how the work should be carried on.....

B. The British Attitude Toward the Czech Problem (November, 1938 to April, 1939)

No. 255 Extract from a Statement Made by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, November 1, 1938

. . . . . What we are doing now, as was pointed out by my Noble Friend the Foreign Secretary, is witnessing the readjustment of frontiers laid down in the Treaty of Versailles. I do not know whether the people who were responsible for those frontiers thought they would remain permanently as they were laid down. I doubt very much whether they did. They probably expected that from time to time the frontiers would have to be adjusted. It is impossible to conceive that those people thought that the present boundaries would be the right frontiers for all time. The question is not whether those frontiers should be readjusted from time to time but whether they should be readjusted by negotiation and discussion, or be readjusted by war. Readjustment is going on and, in the case of the Hungarian frontier, arbitration by Germany and Italy has been accepted by Czechoslovakia and Hungary for the final determination of the frontier between them. I think I have said enough about Czechoslovakia. . . . . .

No. 256 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, November 3, 1938

When in October last (October 3-6) Mr. Chamberlain's Government defended the Munich Agreement in the House of Commons, the question of the guarantee of what was left of Czechoslovakia played an important part. This question had, as will be remembered, already been keenly discussed by the public during the days preceding. At that time this question appeared to be of special urgency. The guarantee was intended to compensate Czechoslovakia, as it were, for her loss of territory and the consequent weakening of her possibilities of defence.

The contents of the guarantee undertaken by Britain and France are apparent from the Anglo-French proposals of September 19, and from the Appendix to the Munich Agreement of September 29. It is a guarantee of the new Czech frontiers against unprovoked aggression, with the object of securing Czech independence.

On October 4, in the House of Commons, Sir Thomas Inskip defined the Government's position with regard to the guarantee, provisional so far, undertaken by Britain and France. The British Government, he said, felt themselves morally bound by the terms of this guarantee, even though at the time no formal treaty had been concluded. In the case of an unprovoked attack on Czechoslovakia, they considered themselves bound to do everything in their power to preserve Czech integrity. In other words, the British Government were merely prepared to defend the independence of Czechoslovakia, and to take action in the event of an unprovoked attack upon that country.

The question of the guarantee was again discussed in the House of Commons on November 1. Mr. Chamberlain was cautious in dealing with this subject. With respect to the contents of the hitherto provisional guarantee, he repeated that it referred to unprovoked aggression, but did not mean "a crystallization of the frontier." A future and final guarantee could only be settled when the whole problem of minorities in Czechoslovakia had been cleared up. The original British offer was based merely on participation in an international guarantee, but he could not state how the terms of this guarantee would run or who would participate in it. The Prime Minister also referred to Inskip's above-mentioned declaration of October 4.

It is noteworthy that Mr. Chamberlain refrained from entering into any details concerning the character of a final guarantee, and that he simply spoke of a British "offer," without designating this guarantee as a goal of British foreign policy. Furthermore it is interesting, in view of the conditions prevailing at the time, that he referred solely to the case of unprovoked aggression, but did not speak of a guarantee of the frontiers in the sense of a guarantee of the sovereign territory of the State.

von Dirksen

No. 257 Statement Made by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, March 14, 1939

Mr. Attlee: Is it not clear that influences are being brought to bear to separate Slovakia from the rest of Czechoslovakia and are not the Government bound by their guarantee under the Munich Agreement to have a very close interest in anything which concerns the integrity of the remainder of the Czechoslovak State?

The Prime Minister: Without full information, I should not like to express an opinion upon the first point which was raised by the right hon. Gentleman. Assuming it to be true, that would not be a ground for bringing into force the guarantee.

Mr. Attlee: Does the Prime Minister say that the Government are merely awaiting for a *fait accompli* and have they taken any steps to have any consultation with the representatives of the Czechoslovakian Government or with the French Government or any other guarantor, seeing that there are rumors and implications which can hardly be disregarded altogether, of a possible break-up of Czechoslovakia, which this country has guaranteed?

The Prime Minister: I am not sure what the right hon. Gentleman thinks that we should do. I might remind him that the proposed guarantee is one against unprovoked aggression on Czechoslovakia. No such aggression has yet taken place.

No. 258 The Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in London

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, March 15, 1939

The British Ambassador called upon the State Secretary on Tuesday morning to inquire about our view of the situation with regard to Czechoslovakia. Henderson remarked that he wished neither to make a *démarche,* nor to create the impression that his Government were interfering in this affair. The preponderance of German interests in Czechoslovakia was an established fact. The British press, too, had shown extreme reserve. On the other hand, it would be unfortunate if the prospective visit of Mr. Stanley, President of the Board of Trade (which has meanwhile been cancelled today), should coincide with forcible proceedings against Czechia on the part of the Reich.

The State Secretary explained to the Ambassador our complaints with regard to incidents in Czechoslovakia, and made it clear that in Slovakia, Dr. Tiso's Government was the only rightful one. In answer to questions the State Secretary admitted that Dr. Tiso was probably planning to declare the independence of Slovakia. Germany had made no representations in Prague hitherto, but it was an urgent necessity for us that order should be established in this part of Central Europe. To Henderson's question as to whether we desired to break up or preserve Czechoslovakia, the State Secretary answered that we were solely interested in the maintenance of order. Henderson further advocated that Germany and Czechoslovakia should get into direct touch with each other, to which the State Secretary replied that we also were anxious to observe the proprieties in asserting Germany's legitimate claims. When Hen-

derson mentioned the Munich Agreement, the State Secretary remarked that the object of the Munich Agreement had been to maintain peace, that this object had been attained, and for the rest the Agreement was a thing of the past. Sir Nevile Henderson concluded by again recognizing Germany's preponderant interests throughout Czech territory.

Woermann

No. 259 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, March 16, 1939

In the House of Commons on March 15, the Prime Minister began with a short survey of the facts connected with developments in Czechoslovakia since March 10, as they appeared to him in the light of the reports at his disposal.

He then quoted Sir Thomas Inskip's remarks on October 4 last on the guarantee question,* and continued as follows:—

"That remained the position until yesterday, and I may say that recently His Majesty's Government have endeavored to come to an agreement with the other Governments represented at Munich on the scope and terms of such a guarantee, but up to the present we have been unable to reach any such agreement. In our opinion the situation has radically altered since the Slovak Diet declared the independence of Slovakia. The effect of this declaration put an end by internal disruption to the State whose frontiers we had proposed to guarantee and accordingly, the condition of affairs described by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Dominions, which was always regarded by us as being only of a transitory nature has now ceased to exist, and His Majesty's Government cannot accordingly hold themselves any longer bound by this obligation.*

"In a speech which I made at Birmingham on January 30 last, I pointed out that we ought to define our aims and attitude, namely, our determination to search for peace. I added that I felt it was time now that others should make their contribution to a result which would overflow in benefits to many besides those immediately concerned. It is natural, therefore, that I should bitterly regret what has now occurred. But do not let us on that account be deflected from our course. Let us remember that the desire of all the peoples of the world still remains concentrated on the hopes of peace and a return to the atmosphere of understanding and good will which has so often been disturbed. The aim of this Government is now, as it has always been, to promote that desire and to sub-

* Cf. No. 256.

stitute the method of discussion for the method of force in the settlement of differences. Though we may have to suffer checks and disappointments from time to time, the object that we have in mind is of too great significance to the happiness of mankind for us to give it up lightly or to set it on one side."

By Order

von Selzam

No. 260 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, March 15, 1939

This afternoon I handed Lord Halifax the text of the Agreement* and commented according to instructions.

I pointed out that recent persecutions of Germans and the general absence of law and order in Czechia had created an untenable state of affairs. I also pointed out to him that the difficulty of maintaining German-Czech relations had been aggravated during the past month by the disloyal and obstructive attitude of the vast majority of Czech officials. Consequently, when the conflict between Prague and Slovakia had broken out in the previous week, repercussions among the German population on Czech territory had inevitably followed.

Halifax expressed his regret that the events of the last few days had given fresh cause for disturbance and unrest, and had interrupted the process of general tranquillization. The result had been that once more there was uncertainty about our intentions. For the moment it was impracticable for Mr. Stanley, President of the Board of Trade, to visit Berlin and to bring about a settlement of general economic questions, which, at the outset, had shown such great promise. He said that, in the relations between Germany and Britain the hands of the clock had been set back considerably.

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* The German-Czech Agreement runs as follows:—

In Berlin today, in the presence of Herr von Ribbentrop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Fuehrer received Dr. Hacha, President of Czechoslovakia, and Dr Chvalkovsky, Czechoslovakian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in accordance with their wish. At the meeting the serious situation arising from the incidents of the previous weeks in what till then had been the territory of the State of Czechoslovakia was examined with complete frankness. Both sides concurred in expressing their conviction that the goal of all efforts must be to secure quiet, order, and peace in this part of Central Europe. The President of Czechoslovakia declared that in order to bring about this aim and a general pacification, he placed the destiny of the Czech people and their country in the hands of the Fuehrer of the German Reich with full confidence. The Fuehrer accepted this declaration and expressed his resolve to take the Czech people under the protection of the German Reich and to assure them an autonomous development of their national life in harmony with their national characteristics.

Berlin, March 15. 1939

Adolf Hitler — Dr. Hacha

von Ribbentrop — Dr. Chvalkovsky

I answered the British Foreign Secretary that the events of the last few days had been at bottom merely the inevitable consequence of the creation of such an impossible political structure as Czechoslovakia by the Versailles Powers. The solution attempted in Munich had been jeopardized by the unconstitutional proceedings of the Prague Government against Slovakia. The cause of the conflict with Slovakia, the persecutions of the Germans, and the growth of anarchical conditions in Czechia had hastened the course of events. The settlement by treaty of which the British Government was now being informed had been concluded on the basis of the negotiation between the Fuehrer and President Hacha. In any case there was no connection between those events and German-British economic relations. It was remarkable that whenever Germany took action a general storm of indignation arose, while no voice had been raised on the occasion of the occupation of Frankfurt and Düsseldorf, in the midst of profound peace. Halifax then asked a few general questions about the legal form it was intended to give to the new political relations, which I answered as far as I could.

Dirksen

No. 261 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, March 17, 1939

While the tone of the press towards Germany has not become sharper today, there has been a stiffening in the attitude of official and parliamentary circles since yesterday. This manifests itself in deliberations concerning recall of Ambassador Henderson to London to report, further in discussions about the introduction of general military service and the formation of a Coalition Cabinet. Chamberlain so far has been guarded in his utterances, but his speech in Birmingham* will throw more light on his own attitude. His moderation up to now has exposed him to considerable attacks from some members of his own party, and his position seems to have suffered during the last few days. The difference of opinion between Chamberlain and Halifax, which has already shown itself occasionally, is becoming more and more evident, the latter advocating a stronger attitude.

Dirksen

* Cf. No. 269.

No. 262 Official German Communiqué, March 18, 1939

(Translation)

Consequent on the action taken by Germany for the restoration of law and order in Bohemia and Moravia, and thereby for the pacification of Central Europe, the British and French Ambassadors made a *démarche* at the German Foreign Office to protest against the alleged illegality of the action taken by Germany. It is reported that both diplomats were informed by official quarters that the Reich Government were not in a position to accept such protests, such action being devoid of any political legal, or moral foundation.

No. 263 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, March 18, 1939

The development and the present state of the political crisis in German relations that has arisen in consequence of the course of events in what till now was Czechoslovakia, may be summarized as follows:—

On the first day, in accordance with the attitude of the Government, the tone of the press continued for the most part reserved and disinterested. Only the traditional anti-German papers started their usual campaign of hate.

From Wednesday, March 15, onwards, the atmosphere became perceptibly tense. The more extreme group within the Cabinet, represented especially by Lord Halifax, who is entirely under the influence of the Foreign Office, gained the upper hand.

Above all it became clear to Mr. Chamberlain's friends and foes alike that the position of the Prime Minister himself had been gravely affected. In people's minds he stood for the policy of Munich, for a settlement with Germany on the basis of trust and frank discussion. A few days earlier he had spoken optimistically to the press about the relaxation in the general situation and the improvement in the economic situation. The public expected great things from Mr. Stanley's forthcoming visit to Berlin.

This structure—people thought—had now collapsed. Mr. Chamberlain's presentation of the case in the House of Commons* was criticized as spineless. His adversaries raised their heads anew. Hence the sharp tone of his speech at Birmingham.**

* Cf. No. 259.
** Cf. No. 269.

What practical deductions with regard to Germany the British Government will draw from the events in Czechoslovakia cannot as yet be definitely ascertained. Discussions on this head are in full swing, both within the Cabinet, and between Britain and the Governments with whom she is on a friendly footing. The divergence between the moderate and the radical sections is becoming clearer. Members of Parliament have visited their constituencies over the week-end to ascertain the feeling of the country. Public opinion is still in a fluid state; it has not yet crystallized into firm decisions. The following facts and considerations may be of some use to indicate the attitude which the British Government may be expected to adopt:—

Mr. Chamberlain's position has been strengthened by his speech in Birmingham, although the influence of the Eden-Churchill opposition group, which now appears to support him, is growing appreciably.

Since the British people believe that the method of friendly negotiations can now be said to have broken down, attempts will consequently be made "to bring Germany to her senses" by taking a strong course, putting obstacles in her path and refusing—in economic matters, for instance—to meet her half-way.

An increase in international activities is already showing itself in the efforts to establish contacts with France, the United States, Soviet Russia, and the Balkan States. It is impossible as yet to say whether these conversations are directed towards the creation of a new and solid coalition against Germany, or merely intended to secure concerted action in case of further German drives against other states, for instance Roumania or Poland.

von Dirksen

No. 264 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation in part)

London, March 24, 1939

In the sitting of the House of Commons of March 23, Mr. Henderson, M.P., asked the Prime Minister what representations the British Ambassador in Berlin had made to the German Government, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, in view of the fact that the German Government had failed to consult with His Majesty's Government on recent developments in relation to Czechoslovakia, as Herr Hitler had promised in the Anglo-German Declaration* signed at Munich, on September 29, 1938.

* Cf. No. 217.

Mr. Butler, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, answered as follows: "I am not aware that the *communiqué* in question contained such a statement. The second part of the question does not therefore arise."

By Order

von Selzam

No. 265 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, March 24, 1939

Supplement to my report of March 24 with reference to Butler's statement* in the House of Commons:

Butler's answer to Henderson's question can only be interpreted as meaning that British Government's standpoint is that German action in Czechoslovak question does not constitute a breach of the agreement to consult contained in German-British declaration of September 29, 1938.

Kordt

No. 266 Speech by the Fuehrer to the Reichstag, April 28, 1939

Extract

(Translation)

. . . . . Since the day on which I entered politics I have lived for no other idea than that of winning back the freedom of the German nation, restoring the power and strength of the Reich, overcoming the internal disruption of our nation, remedying its isolation from the rest of the world, and safeguarding the maintenance of its independent economic and political existence. I intended only to restore that which others once broke by force, I desired only to make good that which satanic malice or human rashness had destroyed or demolished. I have, therefore, taken no step which violated the rights of others, but have only restored that right which was violated twenty years ago.

The present Greater German Reich contains no territory which was not in the distant past a part of this Reich, bound up with it or subject to its sovereignty. Long before an American Continent had been settled—or even discovered—by white people, this Reich existed, not merely in its present extent, but with the addition of many territories and provinces which have since been lost.

* Cf. No. 264.

. . . . . I have never, Gentlemen, sought to disguise the fact that it is scarcely possible anywhere in Europe to arrive at a settlement of state and national boundaries, which would be satisfactory to all parties. On the one hand the migration of nations which has gradually come to a standstill during the last few centuries, and the formation of large communities on the other hand, have created a situation which will necessarily be considered in some way or other unsatisfactory by those concerned. It was, however, precisely the way in which these racial and political developments were gradually stabilized that led many during the last century to cling to the hope that in the end a compromise would be found between respect for the national life of the various European peoples and the recognition of established political structures—a compromise by which the entity of nations could nevertheless be preserved.

These hopes were destroyed by the Great War. The Peace Dictate of Versailles did justice neither to the one principle nor to the other. Neither the right of self-determination nor yet the political, let alone the economic, necessities and conditions for European development were respected.

As I have already stressed, I have never denied that a limit must be set even to revising the Treaty of Versailles, and I have always said so with utmost frankness—not because it was tactical, but because it was my innermost conviction. As the national leader of the German people, I have always admitted that, wherever the higher interests of the European community were at stake, national interests must, if necessary, be relegated to second place—and not for tactical reasons. This attitude of mine is an absolutely sincere one.

For quite a number of territories which might possibly be disputed, I therefore made final decisions which I proclaimed not only to the outside world, but also to my own people, and I have seen to it that they were respected.

. . . . . The democratic peace-makers of Versailles can take the credit for having assigned to this Czech people the special rôle of a satellite state, capable of being used against Germany.

For this purpose they arbitrarily adjudicated foreign national property to the Czech State, which was utterly incapable of survival on the strength of the Czech national unit alone; that is, they did violence to other nationalities in order to secure by the creation of this State a latent threat to the German nation in Central Europe. For this State, in which the so-called predominant national element was actually in the minority, could be maintained only by means of a brutal violation of the national units which formed the major part of the population. This violation was possible only in so far as protection and assistance were granted by the European democracies. This assistance could naturally be expected only on condition that this State was prepared loyally to adopt and play the rôle which had been assigned to it at birth.

This rôle was simply to prevent the consolidation of Central Europe, to provide a bridge into Europe for Bolshevist aggression, and above all, to act as a mercenary of the European democracies against Germany. Everything else followed automatically.

The more this State tried to fulfil the task it had been set, the greater was the resistance offered by the national minorities, and the greater the resistance, the more necessary it became to resort to oppression. This inevitable hardening of the internal contradictions led in its turn to an increased dependence on the democratic European founders and benefactors of the State, for they alone were in a position to maintain in the long run the economic existence of this unnatural and artificial creation.

Germany was primarily interested in one thing only, namely, to liberate nearly four million Germans in this country from their unbearable situation and to make it possible for them to return to their mother country and to the thousand-year-old Reich.

It was only natural that this problem should immediately have brought up all the other aspects of the nationalities problem. It was also natural that the withdrawal of the different national groups should deprive what was left of the State of all capacity to survive—a fact of which the founders of the State were well aware when they planned it at Versailles, since it was for this very reason that they decided to do violence to the other minorities, and forced these against their will to become part of this amateurishly constructed State.

. . . . . It was certainly comprehensible that Western Europe was interested in the artificial State brought into being in its interest. But that the nations surrounding this State should regard this interest as a determining factor for them was a false conclusion which was perhaps regrettable for many. In so far as this interest was directed only to the financial establishment of this State, Germany could have had no objection, if this financial interest had not in fact also been subjected exclusively to the imperialistic aims of the democracies.

The financial assistance given to this State was governed by one consideration only, namely, the creation of a state armed to the teeth, destined to form a bastion extending into the German Reich, which certainly promised to be most valuable, either as a starting-point for military operations in connection with invasions of the Reich from the West, or at any rate as an air base. What was expected from this State is shown most clearly by the remark made by the French Air Minister, M. Pierre Cot, who calmly stated that the function of this State, in the event of any conflict, would be that of an aerodrome for the landing and taking-off of bombers, from which it would be possible to destroy the most important German industrial centres in a few hours. It is therefore comprehensible that the German Government in their turn decided to destroy this aerodrome for bombing planes. They did not come to this decision out of hatred for the Czech people—rather the contrary, for in the course of the

thousand years during which the German and Czech peoples had lived together there had often been periods of closest co-operation lasting hundreds of years, although there had also been periods, short ones to be sure, of tension.

. . . . . The Munich decision led to the following results:

1. The return of the most essential parts of the German border settlements in Bohemia and Moravia to the Reich.

2. The possibility of a solution of the other problems of that State, i. e., the return and the separation, respectively, of the existing Hungarian and Slovak minorities.

3. The question of guarantee remained open. As far as Germany and Italy were concerned, the guarantee of this State had from the first been made dependent upon the consent of all interested parties bordering on Czechoslovakia. That is to say, the guarantee was coupled with the actual solution of problems concerning the parties mentioned, which were still unsolved.

The following problems, however, were left open:

1. The return of the Magyar districts to Hungary.
2. The return of the Polish districts to Poland.
3. The solution of the Slovak question.
4. The solution of the Ukrainian question.

As you know, the negotiations between Hungary and Czechoslovakia had scarcely begun, when both the Czechoslovakian and the Hungarian negotiators requested Germany and Italy, the country which stands side by side with Germany, to act as arbitrators in defining the new frontiers between Slovakia, the Carpatho-Ukraine and Hungary. Thus the countries concerned did not avail themselves of the possibility of appealing to the four Powers; on the contrary they expressly renounced this possibility—that is, they declined it.

And this was only natural. All the people living in this territory desired to obtain peace and quiet. Italy and Germany were prepared to answer the appeal. Neither Britain nor France raised any objection to this arrangement, which constituted a formal departure from the Munich Agreement, nor was it possible for them to do so; it would have been madness for Paris or London to have protested against an action on the part of Germany or Italy, which had been undertaken solely at the request of the countries concerned.

The arbitration arrived at by Germany and Italy proved—as always in such cases—entirely satisfactory to neither party. From the very beginning, the diffculty was that it had to be voluntarily accepted by both parties. Thus when the award was put into effect, violent protests were raised shortly after acceptance by two states. Hungary, prompted by general and particular interests, demanded the Carpatho-Ukraine, while

Poland demanded a direct connection with Hungary. It was clear that, under such circumstances, even the remainder of the State which Versailles has brought into being was doomed to die.

It is a fact that perhaps only one single state was interested in the preservation of the status quo; namely Rumania. The man best authorized to speak on behalf of that country told me personally how desirable it would be to have a direct line of communication with Germany via the Ukraine and Slovakia. I mention this as an illustration of the feeling of being menaced by Germany, from which the Rumanian Government—according to American clairvoyants—were supposed to be suffering. It was now clear that it could not be Germany's task permanently to oppose a development or actually to fight for the maintenance of a state of affairs for which we could never have accepted responsiblity.

The stage was thus reached at which, in the name of the German Government, I decided to make a declaration to the effect that we had no intention of incurring any further reprobation by opposing the common wishes of Poland and Hungary as regards their frontiers, simply in order to keep open a road of approach for Germany to Rumania. Since, moreover, the Czech Government resorted once more to its old methods, and Slovakia also gave expression to her desire for independence, the further maintenance of the State was out of the question. Czechoslovakia as constructed at Versailles had had its day. It collapsed, not because Germany desired its collapse, but because in the long run it is impossible to sit at the conference table and construct and uphold artificial states which are incapable of survival.

Consequently, in reply to a question regarding a guarantee, which was submitted by Britain and France a few days before the dissolution of this State, Germany refused this guarantee, since the conditions for it laid down at Munich were entirely lacking. On the contrary, when, after the whole structure of the State had begun to break up and had in practice already broken up, the German Government finally decided to intervene, they did this only in fulfillment of an obvious duty, for the following point should be noted:

On the occasion of the first visit of M. Chvalkovsky, the Czech Foreign Minister, to Munich, the German Government plainly expressed their views on the future of Czechoslovakia. I myself assured M. Chvalkovsky on that occasion that, provided fair treatment was meted out to the large German minorities remaining in the Czech territory, and provided a general appeasement of the whole State was attained, we would guarantee a just attitude on the part of Germany and would, for our part, place no obstacles in the way of the State.

But I also made it clear beyond all doubt that, if the Czechs were to take any steps in accord with the political notions of Dr. Benes, the former President, Germany would not put up with a development along

such lines, but would nip it in the bud. I also pointed out at that time that the maintenance of such a tremendous military arsenal in Central Europe for no reason or purpose could be regarded only as a source of danger.

Later developments proved how justified my warning had been. A continually rising tide of underground propaganda and a gradual tendency on the part of Czech newspapers to relapse into the old style of writing finally made it clear even to the greatest simpleton that the old state of affairs would soon be restored.

The danger of a military conflict was all the greater as there was always the possibility that some madmen might gain control of the vast stores of war material. This involved the danger of explosions, the effects of which could not be gauged.

. . . . . I believe that it is a blessing for millions upon millions of people that I, thanks to the last minute insight of responsible men on the other side, succeeded in averting such an explosion, and found a solution which, I am convinced, has finally eliminated this problem as a source of danger in Central Europe. The contention that this solution is contrary to the Munich Agreement* can neither be justified nor supported.

This Agreement could under no circumstances be regarded as final, as it included an admission that other problems required solution and would have to have it. We really cannot be reproached for the fact that the parties concerned—and this is the deciding factor—did not turn to the four Powers, but only to Italy and Germany; nor yet for the fact that the State as such finally collapsed and there was consequently no longer any Czechoslovakia. It was natural that, long after the ethnographic principle had become inapplicable, Germany should take her own measures to protect her interests dating back a thousand years, which are not only of a political but also of an economic nature. The future will show whether the solution which Germany found is right or wrong. One thing is certain, however, namely, that the solution is not subject to British supervision or criticism, for Bohemia and Moravia, as the remainder of former Czechoslovakia, have no further connection whatever with the Munich Agreement. Inasmuch as British measures in, say Ireland, whether right or wrong, are not subject to German supervision or criticism, the same rule holds good in the case of these old German Electorates.

I entirely fail to understand how the Agreement reached between Mr. Chamberlain and myself at Munich can refer to this case, for the case of Czechoslovakia was settled in the Munich Protocol of the four Powers in so far as it could be settled at all at that time. Apart from this, it was

* Cf. No. 217.

only provided that, if the interested parties should fail to come to an agreement, they should be entitled to appeal to the four Powers, who had agreed in such a case to meet for further consultation after the expiration of three months.

Now, these interested parties did not appeal to the four Powers at all, but only to Germany and Italy. That they were fully justified in doing so, is proved by the fact that neither Britain nor France raised any objections thereto, but themselves accepted the arbitration rendered by Germany and Italy.

No, the agreement reached between Mr. Chamberlain and myself did not relate to this problem, but exclusively to questions concerning the relations between Britain and Germany.

This is clearly shown by the fact that such questions are to be treated in future in the spirit of the Munich Agreement and of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement that is, in a friendly spirit, by way of consultation. If, however, this agreement were to be applied to every future German activity of a political nature, Britain, too, should not take any step, whether in Palestine or elsewhere, without first consulting Germany. It is obvious that we do not expect this, and we likewise refuse to gratify any similar expectation of us.

If Mr. Chamberlain now concludes from this that the Munich Agreement has become invalid because we have broken it, I will note this view and draw the necessary conclusions. . . . . .

C. British Encirclement Policy Since February, 1939

No. 267 Statement Made by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, February 6, 1939

Mr. A. Henderson asked the Prime Minister whether the recent statement of the French Foreign Minister that in the case of war the forces of Great Britain would be at the disposal of France, just as all the forces of France would be at the disposal of Great Britain, is in accord with the views of His Majesty's Government?

The Prime Minister: According to my information, Monsieur Bonnet stated in the Chamber of Deputies on January 26 that in the case of a war in which the two countries were involved all the forces of Great Britain would be at the disposal of France just as all the forces of France would be at the disposal of Great Britain. This is in complete accordance with the views of His Majesty's Government. It is impossible to examine in detail all the hypothetical cases which may arise, but I feel bound to make plain that the solidarity of interest, by which France and this country are united, is such that any threat to the vital interests of France from whatever quarter it came must evoke the immediate co-operation of this country.

No. 268 The German Ambassador in Paris to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Paris, February 28, 1939

Recently and prior to the information concerning the anti-German excesses in Poland,* the Embassy received, from an absolutely reliable source, news which points to certain tendencies towards a revival of the Franco-Polish Alliance and, parallel to this, to the intention of allowing German-Polish relations to become gradually worse. As the chief reason for this, our informant mentions the deep impression made on the Polish Government by the strengthening of the Entente Cordiale between France and Britain, as well as the various statements of Mr. Chamberlain with regard to English aid for France, and in addition to this, a remarkable British activity in Poland.

Welczeck

* Cf. No. 146 ff.

No. 269 Speech by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister in Birmingham, March 17, 1939

Extract

. . . . . Last Wednesday we had a debate in the House of Commons. That was the day on which the German troops entered Czechoslovakia, and all of us, but particularly the Government, were at a disadvantage, because the information that we had was only partial; much of it was unofficial. We had no time to digest it, much less to form a considered opinion upon it. And so it necessarily followed that I, speaking on behalf of the Government, with all the responsibility that attaches to that position, was obliged to confine myself to a very restrained and cautious exposition, on what at the time I felt I could make but little commentary.* And, perhaps naturally, that somewhat cool and objective statement gave rise to a misapprehension, and some people thought that because I spoke quietly, because I gave little expression to feeling, therefore my colleagues and I did not feel strongly on the subject. I hope to correct that mistake tonight. . . . . Really I have no need to defend my visits to Germany last autumn, for what was the alternative? Nothing that we could have done, nothing that France could have done, or Russia could have done could possibly have saved Czechoslovakia from invasion and destruction. Even if we had subsequently gone to war to punish Germany for her actions, and if after the frightful losses which would have been inflicted upon all partakers in the war we had been victorious in the end, never could we have reconstructed Czechoslovakia as she was framed by the Treaty of Versailles. . . . . Germany, under her present régime, has sprung a series of unpleasant surprises upon the world. The Rhineland, the Austrian Anschluss, the severance of Sudetenland—all these things shocked and affronted public opinion throughout the world. Yet, however, much we might take exception to the methods which were adopted in each of those cases, there was something to be said, whether on account of racial affinity or of just claims too long resisted—there was something to be said for the necessity of a change in the existing situation.

But the events which have taken place this week seem to fall into a different category, and they must cause us all to be asking ourselves: "Is this the end of an old adventure, or it is the beginning of a new?"

"Is this the last attack upon a small State, or is it to be followed by others? Is this, in fact, a step in the direction of an attempt to dominate the world by force?"

Those are grave and serious questions. I am not going to answer them tonight. But I am sure they will require the grave and serious consideration not only of Germany's neighbors, but of others, perhaps even be-

* Cf. No. 259.

yond the confines of Europe. Already there are indications that the process has begun, and it is obvious that it is likely now to be speeded up.

We ourselves will naturally turn first to our partners in the British Commonwealth of Nations and to France, to whom we are so closely bound, and I have no doubt that others, too, knowing that we are not disinterested in what goes on in South-Eastern Europe, will wish to have our counsel and advice.

In our own country we must all review the position with that sense of responsibility which its gravity demands. Nothing must be excluded from that review which bears upon the national safety. Every aspect of our national life must be looked at again from that angle. . . . . .

No. 270 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, March 19, 1939

1. In today's morning papers speculations about alleged German intentions on Roumania play the chief rôle, although it is reported that Bucharest, Berlin, and also the Roumanian Embassy here officially deny that Germany has sent an economic ultimatum to Roumania.

2. From a trustworthy source I have the following information on this matter: M. Tilea, the Roumanian Minister here, spoke on his own initiative at the Foreign Office, on March 17, of excessive German economic demands on Roumania, because according to the reports in his possession the German-Roumanian economic negotiations appeared to be approaching a satisfactory conclusion, and thereby the plans advocated by him for the development of Anglo-Roumanian economic relations would come to nothing. M. Tilea received a very strong reprimand from M. Gafencu for taking this step, and was forced, after a rather long altercation on the telephone, to issue a *dementi.*

M. Tilea's intrigues were accepted by Lord Halifax at their face value, more especially as news arrived of hurried movements of German troops from Prague in an easterly direction. News, and constant excitement of the English press, are thus explained.

Kordt

No. 271 Extract from a Speech by Lord Halifax, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the House of Lords, March 20, 1939

. . . . . But if and when it becomes plain to states that there is no apparent guarantee against successive attacks directed in turn on all who might

seem to stand in the way of ambitious schemes of domination, then at once the scale tips the other way, and in all quarters there is likely immediately to be found a very much greater readiness to consider whether the acceptance of wider mutual obligations, in the cause of mutual support, is not dictated, if for no other reason than the necessity of self-defence. His Majesty's Government have not failed to draw the moral from these events, and have lost no time in placing themselves in close and practical consultation, not only with the Dominions, but with other Governments concerned upon the issues that have suddenly been made so plain. . . . . .

No. 272 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, March 20, 1939

Statements which Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax have just made in Parliament have not yet clarified the intentions of the British Government. Lord Halifax limits himself to a sometimes bitter exposition of the events of the last few days. He spoke of the expediency of "wider mutual obligations." An approximate idea of the present state of affairs may be formed from reports received from reliable sources, as follows: The initiative for entering into discussions rests entirely with the British Government. They wish to be the first in determining the policy to be followed, in order to avoid the other states issuing conditional statements, which, in British opinion, would not attain their aim. Obviously the British Government are thinking of drawing a line of demarcation, especially enclosing Roumania; the crossing of this line by an aggressor would lead to war. It is said that the following states have been invited to take part in the question of guarantees: Russia, Poland, Turkey, and Jugoslavia. It is beyond dispute that Hungary has not been approached; that it has been left to Poland to get into touch with Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia; that the same applies to Turkey in regard to Greece, and that there is still some doubt about Bulgaria's attitude.

Kordt

No. 273 The German Minister in Oslo to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Oslo, March 21, 1939

Foreign Minister Koth, who returned on Monday from a visit of several days to Paris, where he had given a course of lectures at the

Sorbonne, denied emphatically, in the first evening papers, the sensational reports in the French press, according to which, twelve days ago, the German Government had demanded, under threat, that the Scandinavian States should throw in their lot with Germany, both economically and politically.

The Foreign Minister declared that he knew absolutely nothing about this statement, and not a word or syllable had been heard about it in the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. He added that this was one of the usual rumors hatched and spread for various reasons. He could only state, as he had already done, that, in times like these, there was every reason for treating such press reports with the greatest skepticism. Herr Koth once more stressed the fact that up to the present day the Norwegian Foreign Ministry had absolutely no knowledge of Germany's alleged "pressure" of twelve days ago.

Dr. Sahm

No. 274 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, March 22, 1939

From a reliable source I have received the following information about the contents of the proposals made by Great Britain in Paris, Warsaw, and Moscow:

The proposed declaration provides that, in cases in which there is reason to apprehend aggression, the signatories of the declaration bind themselves to immediate consultation "to resist aggression."

As far as can be seen so far, Poland entertains doubts about the British proposal. Moscow has not yet answered.

In case this declaration be accepted by the States concerned, Great Britain wants as a second step to submit a proposal for General Staff talks, with the purpose of concluding military agreements.

Kordt

No. 275 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, March 23, 1939

Information to hand clearly indicates that the British plan of declaration, reported in my previous telegram,* is in fact divided into two parts.

* Cf. No. 274.

The first part refers to the guaranteeing of Belgium, Holland, and Switzerland.

The second part aims at the protection of the Eastern European States against aggression. The British Cabinet is said to have been informed by military circles that Roumania, on account of its oil wells, must by all means be kept out of the clutches of the German Army.

A well-informed diplomat here confirmed to me that, up to the present time, Poland had not been able to decide on accepting the British proposals. The decisive reason for this attitude, apart from the great distrust of assistance from Soviet Russia, was the consideration that the relations with Germany would become untenable as a result of such participation, and that, in case of a German attack, Great Britain and France would scarcely be in a position to give Poland effective military assistance. Under these circumstances, the idea of a conference seemed to be coming to the fore again in the Foreign Office. It was hoped that, in a Four Power Conference, effective pressure could be exerted on Poland.

In British Conservative circles, now as always, there exists an opposition—not to be underrated—to the admittance of Soviet Russia to the system planned. From the statement just made by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons one may draw the conclusion that Conservative Party circles close to the Government greatly fear that an area in the East consolidated under German predomination would, after such consolidation, turn upon Great Britain with its full strength.

Kordt

No. 276 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Paris to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)
Paris, March 24, 1939

The greater part of the Paris press carries essentially identical reports to the effect that, during the French President's visit to London, Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Halifax, and M. Bonnet had signed a Protocol or had exchanged *Aide-Mémoires* in which France and Great Britain bound themselves, in case of an attack on Holland or Switzerland, automatically to render these countries armed assistance and to protect their frontiers. The agreement thus concluded confirmed the arrangement made orally in Paris on January 29, between M. Bonnet and the British Ambassador here. The obligations thus entered upon were the same or similar to those already existing with regard to Belgium. *L'Europe Nouvelle,* in the edition of March 18 (p. 301), reports that the obligations with regard to the Netherlands were desired by Great Britain, and those with regard to Switzerland by France.

Bräuer

No. 277 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, March 29, 1939

At the sitting of the House of Commons on March 28, Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Dalton, members of the Labor Party, submitted questions to the Prime Minister in which they requested more detailed information about the state of the discussions now under way between the British Government and other Governments.

Mr. Greenwood, M. P., wanted to know whether the declaration which had been presented to certain Powers dealt solely with consultation, or whether mutual assistance, under certain circumstances even of a military kind, was envisaged.

The Prime Minister replied that it was extraordinarily difficult and delicate to place all the cards on the table at that moment. "It will, at any rate, be readily understood, from what I have said previously, that what the Government have in mind goes a great deal further than consultation."

Mr. Dalton, M. P., desired to know whether it had been made clear to Poland that the British Government were willing, in conjunction with other Governments, to come to Poland's assistance in the event of her being the next victim of "German aggression." The Prime Minister answered that he felt compelled to maintain a certain reserve on this point, but he was prepared to state that the British Government had left no possibility of doubt in the minds of the Governments with which they stood in consultation, about what the British Government were prepared to do under given circumstances.

By Order

von Selzam

No. 278 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Paris to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Paris, March 31, 1939

The radio speech which Premier Daladier made on March 29, and which was relayed in five languages over all French broadcasting stations, has primarily a foreign-political aim. By laying stress on France's will for peace, her strength, and the unity achieved during the last few

months, expressed in the granting of extraordinary powers, the speech is intended to impress both friend and foe, in order to put a stop to the supposed expansion of the latter, and to lure the former into a defensive front against the need of the totalitarian states to expand. The relations with Great Britain are touched upon only lightly, in a few words stating that Franco-British co-operation was never so complete as it is today.

One notices a certain tone of resignation with regard to Germany. After enumerating the attempts for an improvement of the relations, made in Munich, in the German-French declaration of December 6* and in the economic negotiations, Daladier declares that the "conquest" of Czechoslovakia and the occupation of Prague by German troops had been a tremendous blow to these patient efforts. Daladier's comments on this subject are remarkably brief. Following this, he addresses himself to all Powers which, whether in Europe, on the other side of the Channel, or beyond the Atlantic, are of a mind with France and calls on them to co-operate loyally to preserve the peace, and to withstand attack jointly. If on the day after the French Premier's broadcast it is stated in a semi-official announcement that the speech was first presented to, and approved by, the British Government, the characteristic features of British policy stand out still more sharply in M. Daladier's appeal to the peoples of Europe and on the other side of the Atlantic, features which are also expressed in the utterances of Mr. Chamberlain and in British pronouncements previous to the London visit of M. Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister.

Bräuer

No. 279 Statement Made by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, March 31, 1939

. . . . . As I said this morning, His Majesty's Government have no official confirmation of the rumors of any projected attack on Poland and they must not, therefore, be taken as accepting them as true.

I am glad to take this opportunity of stating again the general policy of His Majesty's Government. They have constantly advocated the adjustment, by way of free negotiation between the parties concerned, of any differences that may arise between them. They consider that this is the natural and proper course where differences exist. In their opinion there should be no question incapable of solution by peaceful means, and they would see no justification for the substitution of force or threats of force for the method of negotiation.

As the House is aware, certain consultations are now proceeding with other Governments. In order to make perfectly clear the position of His Majesty's Government in the meantime before those consultations are

* Cf. No. 329.

concluded, I now have to inform the House that during that period, in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect.

I may add that the French Government have authorized me to make it plain that they stand in the same position in this matter as do His Majesty's Government.

No. 280 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, April 1, 1939

The following commentary on Chamberlain's statement* was made in the Foreign Office press conference today:

The British Government were now creating the same prerequisites for peace in East and West, and were thus eliminating the mistakes made at Locarno, to which Poland had continually drawn attention. This decision of the British Government, to break through the reserve observed by them up to this time, and to take an active part in European solidarity, would be received in Poland with the greatest satisfaction and comprehension. This positive appreciation of the British step, however, did not mean that Poland would not modify the principles she had observed in the past and, as far as lay in her power, would observe in the future. Now, as formerly, an absolutely independent policy would be followed, based on her own strength, on friendly relations with the neighboring states, and on alliances and friendships. The British step proved that Great Britain considered Poland an important factor in the peace of Europe. M. Beck's journey to London would represent an important stage in the consultations carried on by Great Britain.

It was said that a visit to France, on her invitation, was intended, but would not take place in connection with the visit to London.

Moltke

No. 281 Speech by the Fuehrer at Wilhelmshaven, April 1, 1939

Extract

(Translation)

He who would gauge the decline and revival of Germany must consider the development of a town such as Wilhelmshaven. A short time

* Cf. No. 279.

ago it was dead, almost without any justification for its existence and without any prospect for the future; today it is again filled with the hum of work and industry. It is a good thing to recall this past experience.

When the town experienced its first wave of prosperity, this coincided with the rise of the German Reich after its struggle for unity. That Germany was a Germany of peace. At the time when the so-called peace-loving virtuous nations waged a number of wars, Germany had only one aim: to maintain peace, to work in peace, to increase the prosperity of her inhabitants, and thus to contribute to human culture and civilization.

That peace-time Germany tried with infinite assiduity, with genius and perseverance, to arrange her internal life, and to secure outside her due place in the sun by taking part in the peaceful rivalry of the nations.

In spite of the fact that Germany was for decades the surest guarantor of peace and devoted herself only to her peaceful occupations, she could not prevent other nations, and in particular their statesmen, from following this progress with envy and hatred and finally replying to it by war.

We know today from historic documents how the policy of encirclement was at that time systematically carried out by Britain. We know from numerous facts and publications that the British took the view that it was necessary to destroy Germany by force of arms, because her destruction would provide every British citizen with a greater measure of prosperity.

It is true that Germany made mistakes at that time. Her worst mistake was that she saw this encirclement and did not guard against it in time. The only fault with which we can reproach the régime of that time is that it was aware of the diabolical plan of an attack on the Reich and yet had not the determination to guard against such an attack in time, but allowed the encirclement to grow until the disaster occurred.

The result was the Great War.

. . . . . If a British statesman thinks today that all problems can and must be settled by frank discussions and negotiations, I would only like to say to that statesman that there was an opportunity to do this for 15 years before our time.

If the world says today that the nations must be divided into those that are virtuous and those that are not—and that the virtuous nations are primarily the British and the French, and the non-virtuous the Germans and Italians—we can only answer, "Judgment as to whether a nation is virtuous or not can be given by not any human being but by God alone."

Perhaps this British statesman will say, "God has already given judgment, for He has presented the virtuous nations with a quarter of the globe, and taken everything away from the non-virtuous." In reply to this, the question may be asked, "By what means have virtuous nations acquired this quarter of the globe?" The answer must be, "They were not virtuous means."

For three hundred years this Britain acted only as a non-virtuous nation, in order now, in her old age, to talk of virtue. Thus it came about that during this non-virtuous British period 46 million Englishmen subjected almost a quarter of the globe, while 80 million Germans, as a result of their virtue, are compelled to live 140 to the square kilometre.

Only 20 years ago, the question of virtue was not fully clear to British statesmen in so far as it related to this conception of property. At that time it was still thought to be compatible with their virtue to take away the colonies acquired by another nation by treaty or purchase, merely because they had the power to do so.

This is the power which is now to be regarded as abominable and abhorrent. In this respect, I can say only one thing to these gentlemen: We do not know whether they believe that sort of thing themselves or not. We assume, however, that they do not believe it, for if we were to assume that they really believed it themselves, we should lose all respect for them.

For 15 years Germany bore her lot and her fate with patience. I also tried at the beginning to settle every problem by discussion. I made proposals in connection with every problem, and they were always rejected. There can be no doubt that every nation possesses interests sacred simply because they are identical with its life and vital rights. If a British statesman today demands that every problem which lies within the sphere of German vital interests must first be discussed with Britain, I could equally well demand that every British problem should first be discussed with us.

The British may well reply that Germans have nothing to do with Palestine. We do not want to have anything to do with Palestine. But Britain has just as little right to interfere in our sphere of existence as Germany has in Palestine.

And if it is stated that this is a matter of general questions of right and law, I could only approve this view if it were to be considered as generally binding. We are told that we had no right to do this or that. I would reply, "What right has Britain in Palestine, to mention only one example, to shoot Arabs merely because they stand up for their country? Who gives her that right?

At any rate, we have not killed thousands in Central Europe but we have settled our problems in calm and order.

But I should like to say one thing. The German nation of today, the German Reich of the present time, are not willing to abandon vital interests, nor are they willing to look on threatening dangers without taking action.

When the Allies formerly changed the map of Europe without taking into consideration utility, right, tradition, or even common sense, we had not the power to prevent it. But if they expect present-day Germany patiently to allow satellite states, whose only task consists in being used

against Germany, to pursue their policy until the day when their function is to be fulfilled, then they mistake present-day Germany for pre-war.

Those who declare that they are willing to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for these Great Powers must be aware that they will burn their fingers.

We really feel no enmity towards the Czech people and we have lived with this people for years. This the British statesmen do not know. They have no idea that the Hradchin was built not by an Englishman but by Germans, or that the Cathedral of St. Vitus was likewise not erected by English but by German hands.

The French did not work in that city either. They do not know that, at a time when Britain was still very small, homage was paid to a German Emperor on that hill, and that a thousand years before I stood there, the first German King there received the homage of the people. The British do not know this. They cannot and do not need to know it.

It is sufficient that we know it, and that it is a fact that for a thousand years this territory has been part of the living space of the German people. We should nevertheless have had nothing against an independent Czech State, if firstly, it had not oppressed Germans and secondly, it had not been intended as an instrument for future attack on Germany.

But when a former French Air Minister writes in a newspaper that it is the task of this Czechia, in view of her admirable position, to strike in time of war at the heart of German industry by air attacks, it will be understood that this is not without interest for us and that we draw certain conclusions therefrom.

It would have been for France and Britain to protect this air base. At any rate, it was for us to prevent such an attack from taking place. I thought I could attain this object in a simple and natural manner. It was only when I saw that any such attempt was doomed to failure and that the anti-German elements would again get the upper hand, and when I saw also that this State had long ago lost its inner capacity for life and that it had already broken down, that I re-established the old German claims and reunited what must be united on grounds of history, geographical position and all the rules of common sense—not in order to oppress the Czech people. It will have more freedom than the peoples oppressed by the virtuous nations.

I believe that I have thus done a great service to peace, for I have rendered useless in good time an instrument that was intended to be used in war against Germany.

When it is stated that this is a sign that Germany wishes to attack the whole world, I do not think this can be meant seriously, for it could only be the expression of a very bad conscience. Perhaps it is anger at the failure of a far-reaching plan; perhaps people think they can thus create

the tactical conditions for the new policy of encirclement. However that may be, I am convinced that I have rendered a great service to peace.

In this conviction, I decided three weeks ago to call the coming Party Congress the "Party Congress of Peace," for Germany is not thinking of attacking other nations.

But what we will not give up is the development of our economic relations. That is our right. And on this point I will accept no instructions from any European or non-European statesman.

The German Reich is not only a great producer, but also an enormous consumer. As we become an irreplaceable commercial partner as a consumer, we, as a producer, are in a position to pay honestly for what we consume.

We are not thinking of waging war on other nations, but this is on condition that they leave us alone. The German Reich is, however, not prepared permanently to accept intimidation or even a policy of encirclement.

I once made an agreement with Britain, namely, the Naval Agreement. It is based on the keen desire which we all possess never to have to wage war on Britain, but this desire can only be reciprocal. If this desire no longer exists in Britain, the practical premises for this agreement are removed.

Germany would, however, accept even this with calm. We are so certain of ourselves because we are strong, and we are strong because we are united, and also because we keep our eyes open. . . . . .

No. 282 The State Secretary at the Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, April 3, 1939

The assurance of assistance given to Poland by British Government and announced by Mr. Chamberlain in House of Commons on March 31* is, according to its wording, only temporary. It is to make perfectly clear British position during time necessary to bring British consultations with other governments to final conclusion. As British Government themselves have been obliged to issue a *démenti* concerning rumors of an imminent German attack on Poland, the giving of assurance of support to Poland in advance was by no means justified by foreign political situation, but due rather to British Government's thinking it desirable to announce to the world and their own already impatient public opinion some result of the busy diplomatic endeavors begun by Foreign Office on March 18.

* Cf. No. 279.

The speech which the Fuehrer made on Saturday at Wilhelmshaven clearly expresses our attitude toward the British attempt at encirclement, and defines the dangers incurred by those countries which allow themselves to be drawn into this attempt.

Weizsäcker

No. 283 Speech by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, April 3, 1939

Extract

..... If, as I hope may be the case, the result of this Debate is to show that fundamentally and generally this House is unanimous in its approval of the declaration which I made on Friday,* and is united and determined to take whatever measures may be necessary to make that declaration effective, the Debate may well serve a very useful purpose. The declaration that I made on Friday has been described, in a phrase so apt that it has been widely taken up, as a cover note issued in advance of the complete insurance policy. I myself emphasized its transitional or temporary character, and the description of it as a cover note is not all a bad one so far as it goes; but where I think it is altogether incomplete is that, while of course, the issue of a cover note does imply that it is to be followed by something more substantial, it is the nature of the complete insurance policy which is such a tremendous departure from anything which this country has undertaken hitherto. It does really constitute a new point—I would say a new epoch—in the course of our foreign policy.

..... Indeed, to have departed from our traditional ideas in this respect so far as I did on behalf of His Majesty's Government on Friday constitutes a portent in British policy so momentous that I think it is safe to say it will have a chapter to itself when the history books come to be written.

The right hon. Gentleman alluded just now to some misunderstanding of the meaning of that declaration. I confess that I was myself surprised that there should be any misunderstanding, for I thought it was clear and plain for all who run to read. Of course, a declaration of that importance is not concerned with some minor little frontier incident; it is concerned with the big things that may lie behind even a frontier incident. If the independence of the State of Poland should be threatened—and if it were threatened I have no doubt that the Polish people would resist any attempt on it—then the declaration which I made means that France and ourselves would immediately come to her assistance.

..... It is not so long ago that I declared my view that this country ought not to be asked to enter into indefinite, unspecified commitments

* Cf. No. 279.

operating under conditions which could not be foreseen. I still hold that view; but here what we are doing is to enter into a specific engagement directed to a certain eventuality, namely, if such an attempt should be made to dominate the world by force. The right hon. Gentleman rightly said that the matter could not end where it stands today. If that policy were the policy of the German Government it is quite clear that Poland would not be the only country which would be endangered, and the policy which has led us to give this assurance to Poland, of course could not be satisfied or carried out if we were to confine ourselves to a single case which, after all, might not be the case in point. These recent happenings have, rightly or wrongly, made every State which lies adjacent to Germany unhappy, anxious, uncertain about Germany's future intentions. If that is all a misunderstanding, if the German Government has never had any such thoughts, well, so much the better. In that case any agreements which may be made to safeguard the independence of these countries will never have to be called upon, and Europe may then gradually simmer down into a state of quietude in which their existence even might be forgotten. . . . . .

No. 284 Extract from a Speech by Sir John Simon, British Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the House of Commons, April 3, 1939

. . . . . With one or two exceptions, which only emphasize the general unity, we may mark this day as a date in our history when there has been accepted and approved in every part of the House this immensely significant statement. I am not disposed to belittle its importance. It is a statement which commits us specifically in a quarter of the world in which we have hitherto been freed from specific commitments, and it presages . . . commitments in other quarters also. It is writing a chapter in our history which carries us further than the catalogue of commitments which my right hon. friend set out in a classic speech at Leamington.* Here we are registering that in taking this stand the country as a whole is more united than on any other contemporary question of policy. That is a most tremendous fact which we shall all have occasion to remember hereafter, and I consider it to be the duty of all of us not to minimize this change in the least, but to recognize it and acknowledge it to the full extent of its application. It proclaims a definite course of action if need arises, and from that decision there can be no looking back.

It is the most serious commitment because it not merely threatens the possibility in certain events of war, but it binds us in certain events to undertake war. . . . . .

* Cf. He is referring to the speech made by Mr. Eden, then British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, at Leamington on November 20, 1936, in which British commitments in the event of war were defined.

No. 285 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, April 4, 1939

Anglo-French co-operation in the air has been increased during the last few weeks by discussions on technical matters as well as by talks with French General Staff officers on military matters. The present visit to London of the French Air Minister may be assumed to be bringing a certain measure of finality to the discussions.

It is said for the first time that in the event of war a joint command of the combined air forces has been agreed upon (similar to that previously arranged for the army and navy).

In all probability the British Air Force will take over this command. The Chief of the General Staff of the British Air Force is mentioned as the joint Commander-in-Chief in case of war.

At the same time, more detailed discussions are evidently taking place about training and utilizing British air units on French territory and about the speeding up and extension of the French aircraft industry with the definite object of aligning the equipment of both air forces.

By Order

von Selzam

No. 286 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation in part)

London, April 10, 1939

The official text of Mr. Chamberlain's statement in the House of Commons on April 6 concerning the negotiations of the British Government with the Polish Foreign Minister is now available. The Prime Minister replied as follows to a question from Mr. Greenwood (Laborite):

"I can give the House the following account of the conversations with the Polish Foreign Minister. The account has been framed jointly by M. Beck on behalf of the Polish Government and by the Foreign Secretary and myself on behalf of His Majesty's Government. The conversations with M. Beck have covered a wide field and shown that the Governments are in complete agreement upon certain general principles.

It was agreed that the two countries were prepared to enter into an agreement of a permanent and reciprocal character to replace the present

temporary and unilateral assurance given by His Majesty's Government to the Polish Government.*—Pending the completion of the permanent agreement, M. Beck gave His Majesty's Government an assurance that the Polish Government would consider themselves under an obligation to render assistance to His Majesty's Government under the same conditions as those contained in the temporary assurance already given by His Majesty's Government to Poland.

Like the temporary assurance, the permanent agreement would not be directed against any other country but would be designed to assure Great Britain and Poland of mutual assistance in the event of any threat, direct or indirect, to the independence of either. It was recognized that certain matters including a more precise definition of the various ways in which the necessity for such assistance might arise, would require further examination before the permanent agreement could be completed.

It was understood that the arrangements above mentioned should not prevent either Government from making agreements with other countries in the general interest of the consolidation of peace."

Mr. Greenwood further asked the Prime Minister whether the British Government intended on completion of the discussions with Colonel Beck to use what influence they had to get similar reciprocal arrangements between the French and the Polish Governments. Mr. Greenwood asked further whether the Prime Minister then proposed to proceed swiftly to that basis of association, which the Opposition considered as essential and fundamental. The Prime Minister answered as follows:

"In regard to the first question, I think the arrangements already existing between Poland and France are practically similar to those which are contemplated between the Polish and British Governments. With regard to the second supplementary question, it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to proceed with the consultations and communications which have already been begun with other Governments."

The Labor Member, Mr. Benn, asked the Prime Minister whether it had already been decided what would constitute a threat to Polish independence. The Prime Minister gave an answer in the negative. As he had already mentioned in the statement quoted above, the question would form the subject of further discussions between the British and Polish Governments.

The Liberal Member, Sir P. Harris, asked the Prime Minister if he could give an assurance that at an early date staff conversations would be initiated with Poland, in which France could take part, and whether he could assure the House that friendly contact would be kept with Russia during these discussions. The Prime Minister replied in answer to the first part of the question that he was not in a position to give an assurance of that specific character, but stated that Sir P. Harris could rest assured that when this Anglo-Polish Agreement was completed, or

* Cf. No. 279.

while it was being completed, the British Government would take all the steps that seemed to them necessary to make it effective. In regard to the other question the Prime Minister replied that Lord Halifax was keeping in close touch with the Soviet Ambassador.

The Conservative Member, Mr. Boothby, asked with what other Governments consultations were taking place. The Prime Minister replied that consultations were in progress with a number of other Governments, but that did not mean that the negotiations were limited to these Governments alone.

The Labor Member, Mr. Noel Baker, asked finally if the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs would be in contact with the Soviet Government during the Easter holidays. Mr. Chamberlain replied that it was certain that Lord Halifax intended to remain in close contact with the Soviet Ambassador, but he did not mean to bind him by saying that he would see the Soviet Ambassador daily.

The Prime Minister answered in the affirmative a further supplementary question whether the Government of the United States were being kept fully informed of the consultations.

At the meeting of the House of Lords on April 6, Lord Cecil, in reference to Mr. Chamberlain's statement in the House of Commons on March 31 (guarantee declaration to Poland), inquired whether the question as to what constituted a threat to Polish independence was to be left for Poland or the British Government to decide. Lord Plymouth thereupon delivered the following statement:—

"It is obvious that unless Poland herself considered her independence in danger it would not be for any other country to assert a different view. Where issues of so grave a character are considered, it would no doubt be found that the Polish Government would keep His Majesty's Government fully informed of all developments, but it is unlikely that any difference of opinions would arise since the policy of the two Governments —namely, resistance to domination by force—is identical."

By Order

von Selzam

No. 287 The German Foreign Minister to Various German Diplomatic Representatives in Europe

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, April 12, 1939

As you are aware, the British Government, in agreement with the French Government, are continuing their efforts towards an encirclement of Germany and Italy. I request you to refrain from making a *démarche* in this matter. Should discussions arise, please answer to the following effect:—

We do not expect that any other States will allow themselves to be hoodwinked by Great Britain. If, nevertheless, some other Governments were to snap at the British bait, we should regret this in the interests of the States concerned. We should consider all participation in, or connection with, such combinations as directed against ourselves, and we should take our stand accordingly. In this connection you may refer to the statement contained in the Fuehrer's speech of April 1 at Wilhelmshaven: "Those who declare that they are willing to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for these great Powers, must be aware that they will burn their fingers."

Moreover, I request you to treat the whole affair with the greatest composure in conversations, and duly to characterize the nervous officiousness with which the British try to induce other States to work for their purposes.

Ribbentrop

No. 288 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, April 13, 1939

The declaration of the guarantees in favor of Greece and Roumania given by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons is worded, according to Reuter, as follows:

"His Majesty's Government feel that they have both a duty and a service to perform by leaving no doubt in the mind of anybody as to their position. I therefore take this opportunity of saying on their behalf that His Majesty's Government attach the greatest importance to the avoidance of disturbance by force or threat of force of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean and the Balkan Peninsula.

"Consequently they have come to the conclusion that in the event of any action being taken which clearly threatens the independence of Greece or Roumania and which the Greek or Roumanian Government respectively considered it vital to resist with the national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Greek or Roumanian Government, as the case might be, all the support in their power.

"We are communicating this declaration to the Governments directly concerned and to others, especially Turkey, whose close relations with the Greek Government are known.

"I understand that the French Government are making a similar declaration this afternoon."

Kordt

No. 289 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, April 14, 1939

1. By their statements yesterday, Chamberlain and Halifax have managed to dispel the fears spreading in this country lest the British Government might deviate again from their new course. The fact that Eden as well as Churchill declared themselves essentially in agreement with Chamberlain plays an essential role in this connection. Statements of Opposition speakers and all other talk about an acute Chamberlain crisis have therefore lost their sting. The position of the Cabinet is strengthened. It is not out of the question that Churchill and Eden may be taken into the Cabinet, especially if Italy should break her promise to withdraw the volunteers from Spain after the Victory Parade.

2. Criticism of Mr. Chamberlain's policy with regard to Italy is less to the fore than the demand to get into closer contact with Russia. Especially noteworthy for this is yesterday's debate in the House of Lords, who until very recently rejected in unmistakable terms all advances to Russia. Also noteworthy in this connection are the statements of Sir John Simon in the House of Commons, which indicate that attempts are still being made to solve the problem of bringing Russia somehow into the so-called "system for the assurance of peace against aggression", while taking the well-known wishes of Poland and Roumania into consideration.

Kordt

No. 290 The German Embassy in Paris to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Paris, April 15, 1939

Havas Spécial reports as follows on the Chamberlain-Daladier statements and the subsequent negotiations:

"Today, as yesterday, competent circles lay stress on the fact that the Franco-British statements do not represent the final result of the negotiations at present in progress. In the general diplomatic plan, initiated on the day following the German *coup de force* against Czechoslovakia, with a view to creating a system of mutual assistance based on bilateral pacts between the great democracies in the west and the friendly Powers

in eastern Europe, the attitude of the British and French Governments merely signifies a measure adopted in order to bridge a transition period, pending the final conclusion of diplomatic treaties now in course of preparation.

"The discussions between the various Foreign Offices concerned therefore continue. A lively exchange of opinion is at present taking place especially between Bucharest and Warsaw, giving the impression that the difficulties encountered some time ago are now on the point of being overcome.

"The negotiations with the U. S. S. R. are also being continued, in an equally satisfactory manner, with a view to defining the limits of cooperation which Soviet Russia is prepared to undertake in connection with the system of mutual assistance now being developed.

"In regard to Turkey, it is believed that the negotiations will soon be concluded. At any rate, it is not yet known what concrete form the obligations between Turkey on the one hand, and Great Britain and France on the other, will assume.

"In regard to Bulgaria, the impression is that the unrest manifested there in consequence of recent events may possibly lead to a *rapprochement* between Sofia and the Powers of the Balkan Entente."

Embassy

No. 291 The German Minister in Bucharest to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Bucharest, April 15, 1939

I have learned from a reliable source that after the Roumanian refusal to join a Four Power Pact—England, France, Poland, Roumania—in a system of political encirclement of Germany, England has tried to prevail on Roumania to extend *contra omnes* the Roumanian-Polish Alliance directed against Russia. Roumania has declined to do this.

Fabricius

No. 292 Statement Made by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, April 18, 1939

Mr. Mander asked the Prime Minister what staff conversations have been arranged or are contemplated with countries with which military obligations have been undertaken?

The Prime Minister: "His Majesty's Government will maintain all necessary contacts, in military as in other matters, with the countries in question."

Mr. Mander: "Is it not vital that such conversations should take place with Poland, Roumania, and Greece, and cannot the right hon. gentleman give an assurance that they are actually taking place?"

The Prime Minister: "The hon. member must be satisfied with the assurance that I have just given him."

No. 293 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, April 26, 1939

The British Ambassador, who came to the Foreign Office today to communicate to me Mr. Chamberlain's announcement of compulsory military service,* made the following explanations in the course of his visit:

Mr. Chamberlain's policy was one of peace; yet Mr. Chamberlain believed that the best way of preserving peace was to be found in an absolutely clear demonstration of British preparedness to fight if necessary, and to defend themselves against aggression. The British Government, however, were determined, as always, to do everything that lay in their power to preserve peace, and to seek for a satisfactory solution of the difficulties without recourse to war. The Government did not deny that problems existed, but were convinced that they could be solved without a world war. The Government had no aggressive intentions and did not wish to be drawn by others into aggressive actions. If they had openly declared themselves ready to oppose the aggressive actions of a third party under certain specified circumstances, this had been done in the hope of avoiding incidents which could lead to war, but was meant in no way to encircle or threaten Germany or Italy.

In reply to Henderson's carefully worded communication I answered quite briefly with the remark that we judged the British Government according to their deeds and not their words. There would be no sense in my indulging in arguments, seeing that anyhow the Fuehrer would be speaking in two days' time—the Fuehrer's speech was already at the printer's. There was one remark which I could not help making: the British guarantee to Poland was certainly the means most calculated to encourage Polish subordinate authorities in their oppression of Germans there. Consequently it did not prevent, but on the contrary, provoked incidents in that country.

Weizsäcker

* Cf. No. 251.

No. 294 Memorandum Addressed by the German Government to the British Government, April 28, 1939

When in the year 1935, the German Government made an offer to the British Government to fix the strength of the German fleet, by treaty, in a definite proportion of the strength of the naval forces of the British Empire, they did so in the firm conviction that the recurrence of an armed conflict between Germany and Great Britain was excluded for all time.

In expressing voluntary recognition of the priority of British interests at sea, by offering the ratio 100:35, they believed that, with this decision, unique in the history of the great Powers, they were taking a step which would lead to the establishment of a friendly relationship between the two nations for all time. This step on the part of the German Government was naturally conditional on the British Government's intention also to adopt a political attitude which would assure a friendly development of Anglo-German relations.

On this basis, and upon these conditions, the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of June 18, 1935, was brought about. Both parties unanimously expressed themselves to this effect, upon the conclusion of the Agreement. Last autumn, moreover, after the Munich Conference, the German Chancellor and the British Prime Minister solemnly confirmed, in the Declaration which they signed, that they regarded the Agreement as symbolical of the desire of both parties never again to wage war on one another.

The German Government have always adhered to this wish and are still inspired by it today. They are conscious of having acted according to it in their policy, and feel that they have never intervened in the sphere of British interests, nor encroached in any way on these interests. On the other hand, they must take note, to their regret, of the fact that the British Government are lately departing more and more from the course of an analogous policy towards Germany.

It is clearly shown by the political decisions which the British Government has made known during the past weeks, as well as by the inspired anti-German attitude of the British press, that the British Government are now guided by the opinion that Britain must always take up an attitude hostile to Germany, in whatever part of Europe Germany might be involved in warlike conflict, even in a case where British interests are not affected in any way by such a conflict.

Thus the British Government no longer regard a war between Britain and Germany as an impossibility, but, on the contrary, as a cardinal problem of British foreign policy.

By means of this encirclement policy, the British Government have unilaterally deprived the Naval Agreement of June 18, 1935 of its basis, and have thus put out of force this Agreement, as well as the complementary declarations of July 17, 1937.

The same applies to Part III of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of July 17, 1937, which establishes the obligation to make a mutual Anglo-German exchange of information. The execution of this obligation rests naturally on the condition that a relationship of open confidence should exist between the two partners. Since the German Government, to their regret, can no longer recognize the existence of this relationship, they must also conclude that the provisions of Part III, referred to above, have lapsed.

The qualitative provisions of the Anglo-German Agreement of July 17, 1937 remains unaffected by these observations which have been forced upon the German Government against their will. The German Government will abide by these provisions even in the future, and so make their contribution to the prevention of a general unlimited international race in naval armaments.

Moreover, if the British Government should desire to enter into negotiations with Germany concerning the problems here involved, the German Government are ready to do so. They would be most happy if it then proved possible to reach a clear and unambiguous understanding on a sure basis.

No. 295 Speech by the Fuehrer to the Reichstag, April 28, 1939

Extract

(Translation)

. . . . . During the whole of my political activity I have always stood for the idea of close friendship and collaboration between Germany and Britain. In my movement I found innumerable others of like mind. Perhaps they joined me because of my attitude in this matter. This desire for Anglo-German friendship and co-operation conforms not merely to my sentiments which result from the origins of our two peoples, but also to my realization of the importance of the existence of the British Empire for the whole of mankind.

I have never left room for any doubt of my belief that the existence of this Empire is a factor of inestimable value for the whole of human cultural and economic life. By whatever means Great Britain acquired her colonial territories—and I know that they were always those of force and very often extreme brutality—nevertheless, I am well aware that no other Empire has ever come into being in any other way, and that in the final resort it is not so much the methods that are taken into account in history, as success, and not the success of the methods as such, but rather the general good which has accrued from such methods.

Now, there is no doubt that the Anglo-Saxon people have accomplished colonizing work of immeasurable value in the world. For this

work I have sincere admiration. The thought of destroying this labor would and does appear to me, from a higher human point of view, as nothing but the effluence of human wanton destructiveness. Yet my sincere respect for this achievement does not mean that I will neglect to secure the life of my own people.

I regard it as impossible to achieve a lasting friendship between the German and Anglo-Saxon peoples, if the latter will not recognize that there are not only British but also German interests, not only that the preservation of the British Empire is the meaning and purpose of the lives of Britishers, but also that for Germans the freedom and preservation of the German Reich is their life purpose. A genuine, lasting friendship between these two nations is conceivable only on the basis of mutual regard.

The British people rules a great Empire. It built up this Empire at a time when the German people was internally weak. Previously Germany had been a great Empire. At one time she ruled the Occident. In bloody struggles and religious dissensions and as a result of internal political disintegration, this empire declined in power and greatness, and finally fell into a deep sleep. But, when this old empire appeared to have reached its end, the seeds of its rebirth were already springing up. From Brandenburg and Prussia there arose a new Germany, the Second Reich, and out of it has grown at last the German People's Reich.

I hope that all British people understand that we do not possess the slightest feeling of inferiority to Britishers. Our historical past is too tremendous for that!

Britain has given the world many great men, and Germany has produced no fewer. The severe struggle to maintain the life of our people has cost us in the course of three centuries for the mere defence of the Reich, a sacrifice of lives which far exceeds that which other peoples have had to make in order to maintain their existence. If Germany, a country which was for ever being attacked, was not able to retain her possessions, but was compelled to sacrifice many of her provinces, this was due solely to her political maldevelopment and resulting impotence! That condition has now been overcome. Therefore, we Germans do not feel in the least inferior to the British nation. Our self-esteem is just as great as an Englishman's pride in England. In the history of our people, now of some two thousand years' standing, there are deeds and events enough to fill us with sincere pride.

Now, if Britain cannot appreciate our point of view, but thinks perchance that she may regard Germany as a vassal State, then, of course, our affection and friendship have been offered in vain. We shall not despair or lose heart on that account, but—relying on the consciousness of our own strength and on the strength of our friends—we shall then find ways and means to secure our independence without impairing our dignity.

I have heard the statement of the British Prime Minister to the effect that he is unable to put any trust in German assurances. Under these circumstances I regard it as a matter of course that we should no longer expect him or the British people to accept the implications of a situation which is conceivable only under conditions of mutual confidence.

When Germany became National Socialist and thus paved the way for her national resurrection, I made a proposal for a voluntary restriction of German naval armaments, on my own initiative, in pursuance of my unswerving policy of friendship with Britain. That restriction, however, was based on one condition, namely the will and the conviction that a war between Britain and Germany would never again be possible. This will and this conviction I hold even to the present day.

Now, however, I am compelled to state that the policy of Britain both unofficially and officially permits no doubt but that such a conviction is no longer shared in London, and that, on the contrary, the opinion prevails there that, no matter in what conflict Germany might some day be entangled, Great Britain would always have to take her stand against Germany. Thus a war against Germany is taken for granted in that country. I profoundly regret such a development, for the only claim I have ever made, and shall continue to make, on Britain is for the return of our colonies. But I made it perfectly clear that this would never become the cause of a military conflict. I have always held that the British, to whom those colonies are of no value, would some day appreciate the German position, and would then value German friendship higher than the possession of territories which while yielding no real profit whatever to them, are of vital importance to Germany.

Apart from this, however, I have never advanced a claim which might in any way have interfered with British interests, or have become a danger to the British Empire and thus have spelled any kind of harm to Britain. I have always kept within the bounds of such demands as are most intimately connected with Germany's living-space and thus with the inalienable property of the German nation. Now that Britain, both through the press and officially, expresses the view that Germany should be opposed under all circumstances and confirms this by the well-known policy of encirclement, the basis for the Naval Treaty has been removed. I have, therefore, resolved to send a communication to this effect to the British Government today.

This is not a matter of practical importance to us—for I still hope that we shall be able to avoid an armaments race with Britain—but a matter of self-respect. If, however, the British Government should wish to enter once more into negotiations with Germany on this problem, no one would be happier than I at the prospect of being able, after all, to come to a clear and straightforward understanding.

Moreover, I know my people—and I rely on them. We do not want anything that did not formerly belong to us, and no State will ever be

robbed by us of its property; but whoever believes that he is able to attack Germany will find himself confronted with a measure of power and resistance compared with which that of 1914 was negligible.....

No. 296 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)
London, April 29, 1939

I. The Fuehrer's speech has been given greater publicity in the London and provincial press than any previous discourse of a foreign statesman.

II. The critical attitude, especially of the Conservative papers, is based primarily on the fact that legislative measures in regard to the introduction of conscription have not yet been brought to a conclusion, and a reasoning interpretation of the speech might consequently endanger them. In any case, the impression the speech has made in official and political circles is much more positive than the press gives us to understand. Apart from a communication that Great Britain might also be prepared to give Germany a guarantee against attacks, official circles have abstained from giving the press any hint about the language it should adopt. The actual impression is reflected in the statement of a Conservative politician that the speech was an extraordinary achievement of statesmanship, and in the utterance of another politician, to the effect that Jewish financial circles were greatly chagrined that the speech had not been of a "warlike" nature.

III. Although official circles stress the fact that a final judgment on the Fuehrer's speech will not be possible until a detailed study has been made, it may be already stated that the denunciation of the German-British Naval Agreement is taken less seriously than that of the German-Polish Treaty. On the other hand, the publication of the German offer rejected by Poland is psychologically especially calculated to impress the British people.

Kordt

No. 297 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)
London, May 2, 1939

The enclosed appendix is a memorandum of a conversation, which a member of the Embassy had with a trustworthy informant a few days ago.

By Order

von Selzam

Appendix

Memorandum

(Translation)

London, April 18, 1939

My informant today maintained that the British goal in regard to Turkey was to secure the co-operation of the Turkish Army for the British Navy, if Great Britain were involved in warlike actions in the Mediterranean, on account of her existing obligations or in her own interests. In case of an Italian attack on the Suez Canal from Libya or the Dodecanes, the Turkish Army would come to the aid of the British or Egyptian forces.

Great Britain, I am told, has the intention of inducing Turkey to enter into an Anglo-French-Turkish agreement in order to protect the whole of the Mediterranean, whereas Turkey is only prepared to bind herself to Great Britain with respect to the eastern Mediterranean.

No. 298 Memorandum of the State Secretary to the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, May 8, 1939

The French Ambassador paid me his first visit since his return from several weeks' stay in France. We did not mention the rather stormy conversation which we had had on the 18th of March after the Czech affair. Rather, M. Coulondre assured me he had returned to Berlin to continue the task he had set himself from the beginning, namely, the work of appeasement in German-French relations. It was true, he no longer had the broken threads in his hands, and M. Daladier especially had still a decidedly bitter taste in his mouth after the events of March. All the same, he, Coulondre, would centainly do his best for German-French relations.

Passing on to the topic of Poland, M. Coulondre asked about the possibility of new German-Polish conversations. I tried to make it clear to the Ambassador that M. Beck's attitude was a very sterile one. M. Beck, in his reply to us, had ensconced himself like a Pasha in his chair and left it to us to begin the conversation if we were willing to conform to his principles. I remarked that in face of an attitude like that, one did not know where to begin. Moreover the Fuehrer had said that his offer would be made once and only once. The course of action adopted by the demi-gods in West Poland towards our German minority appeared dangerous to me. Incidents with serious consequences might easily happen there. When M. Coulondre interposed the remark that France was

cautioning Warsaw against such stupidities, I answered that it appeared to me, unhappily, that Warsaw was holding the reins too loosely, and was simply not taking adequate steps to prevent such incidents. I had rather failed to see the wisdom of the British Government in the last few weeks. The British guarantee to Poland was like offering sugar to an untrained child before it had learned to listen to reason.

Weizsäcker

No. 299 Speech by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the Albert Hall, London, May 11, 1939

Extract

. . . . . I want to make it equally plain that we are not prepared to sit by and see the independence of one country after another successively destroyed. Such attempts in peace time always have encountered our resistance, and it is because there can be no rest, no security in Europe until the nations are convinced that no such attempt is contemplated that we have given those assurances to Poland,* Roumania, and Greece** that have been so warmly welcomed by them.

It is with the same purpose of calming and stabilizing the situation that we have entered upon conversations with other countries, particularly Russia and Turkey. These conversations are still proceeding, and I cannot therefore give you an account of them today. I will only say it is the earnest hope and desire of our Government that they may be brought to an early and a successful conclusion and that in this way the cause of peace may be still further buttressed.

. . . . . It must be apparent that these assurances to European countries have added greatly to our responsibilities and, therefore, the necessity that we should put ourselves in a position to fulfil them. War in these days is no longer preceded by those preliminary stages which in old days gave ample warning of its approach. Today it is a carefully prepared surprise and the lightning blow which give the first notification, and we must take our precautions accordingly. Other countries which have land frontiers fortify those frontiers, and their fortifications are manned by defenders night and day. Our fortifications are our anti-aircraft defences, and those are entrusted to the Territorial-Army.

We could not put them in more competent hands, but we cannot ask the Territorial-Army to give up its normal occupation and to man these anti-aircraft defences night and day except for short periods and in times of special emergency, and it is necessary, therefore, that we should supplement our present arrangements by utilizing the services of men who

* Cf. Nos. 279 and 286.
** Cf. No. 288.

will be undergoing training for considerable periods of time in order that they may relieve the Territorial-Army when there is no actual emergency.

You know that we have decided to bring in a measure of compulsory military training, details of which are now being discussed in the House of Commons.

. . . . . During the discussions we have been carrying on with these European countries it became clear to us that doubts existed as to the seriousness of our intentions. In particular, our friends all over the Continent, who themselves have long practised compulsory military service, could not understand how, if we meant business, we could entrust our defences to volunteers, to men whose time was taken up in their ordinary occupations and who, until actual war occurred, would never get that intensive training that all Continental armies go through.

This feeling we found so strong that it was actually jeopardizing the success of the policy we were pursuing of trying to build up a peace front, and we could not resist the conviction that there was no single step which we could take which would so encourage our friends and (he added deliberately) so impress any who were not our friends as that we should introduce compulsory military training into this country.

. . . . . In many minds the danger spot in Europe today is Danzig. While our assurances to Poland were clear and precise, and although we should be glad to see the differences between Poland and Germany amicably settled by discussion, and although we think they could and should be so settled, if an attempt were made to change the situation by force in such a way as to threaten Polish independence, that would inevitably start a general conflagration in which this country would be involved. . . . . .

No. 300 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, May 13, 1939

From a reliable source I have the following details about the history of Mr. Chamberlain's speech on foreign policy, which he delivered before the women of the Conservative Party at the Albert Hall* last Thursday:

The Prime Minister originally intended not to touch upon the Polish question in his speech. For one thing, he did not wish to say anything as to whether Danzig was included in the British guarantee or not. Shortly before the speech, however, the Polish Government had indi-

* Cf. No. 299.

cated to London and Paris that Germany was feeling very optimistic about Great Britain's unpreparedness to meet the obligations she had assumed in the event of a German-Polish conflict over Danzig.

The French Government shortly afterwards made representations in the same strain to the British Government, and informed them that M. Daladier thought it proper to adopt a firm attitude in his speech on foreign policy. In view of these Polish and French representations, Chamberlain met with Lord Halifax and Sir Alexander Cadogan on Thursday morning, and determined the wording of the passage in which he expressed once more, in unequivocal terms, the attitude of the British Government in regard to Danzig.

von Dirksen

No. 301 Declaration Made by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, May 12, 1939

1. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the Turkish Government have entered into close consultation, and the discussions which have taken place between them and which are still continuing have revealed their customary identity of view.

2. It is agreed that the two countries will conclude a definite long-term agreement of a reciprocal character in the interest of their national security.

3. Pending the completion of the definite agreement, His Majesty's Government and the Turkish Government declare that in the event of an act of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean area they would be prepared to co-operate effectively and to lend each other all aid and assistance in their power.

4. This declaration, like the proposed agreement, is not directed against any country, but is designed to assure Great Britain and Turkey of mutual aid and assistance should the necessity arise.

5. It is recognized by the two Governments that certain matters, including the more precise definition of the various conditions which would bring the reciprocal engagements into operation, will require closer examination before the definite agreements can be completed. This examination is proceeding.

6. The two Governments recognize that it is also necessary to ensure the establishment of security in the Balkans and they are consulting together with the object of achieving this purpose as speedily as possible.

7. It is understood that the arrangements above mentioned do not preclude either Government from making agreements with other countries in the general interest of the consolidation of peace.

8. A similar declaration is being made in Angora this evening.*

* In pursuance of this agreement a pact of mutual assistance was signed on October 19, 1939 between Great Britain, France and Turkey.

No. 302 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, May 15, 1939

After the delivery of a verbal message concerning the Memel Territory, the British Ambassador today opened a discussion of the general political situation. It was obvious that he wanted to make it clear to us that Great Britain did not desire war and wanted to avoid it by a German-Polish compromise, but none the less was ready and determined to aid Poland, in accordance with her pledge, if we wanted to bring about a change in the status of Danzig by force, and thus cause Poland to declare war against us. The Ambassador formulated this in three different ways. However, he did not contradict my criticism of the extraordinary nature of the British policy, which had placed its decisions on war and peace in the hands of the Warsaw Government, or even at the mercy of any subordinate Polish authority. He also admitted that this method simply put a premium on Polish irresponsibility. He said, however, that our sudden march on Prague had in fact produced a complete about face in London. In this frame of mind, Great Britain had now given its word, and would keep it, not so as to leave Poland in possession of German Danzig, but in order not to let her down in case of a conflict. Henderson said that unhappily, during his official activity in Berlin, public opinion in Great Britain had become worse and worse, and was now even prepared to embark on a European war for the Poles, for whom Henderson had not a good word to say. He thought he had reason to believe that the Polish Foreign Minister, M. Beck, wanted anything but war, for he did not expect Poland to reap any benefits from it, although, like the British Government, he was convinced that Anglo-French-Polish arms would be victorious in the end. This war, Henderson added, would be fought on the defensive by the Western Powers. Of course, on each side a few bombs would be thrown on houses, but Great Britain was convinced it would not be Germany and Italy which would finally be successful, for the Axis Powers were shorter-winded. I gave him the only answer possible.

Weizsäcker

No. 303 Speech by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, May 19, 1939

Extract

. . . . . The policy which His Majesty's Government are following at the present time, as the House is aware, has taken on a new develop-

ment since the joining up of Bohemia and Moravia with the German Reich. I do not know whether the German Government themselves, at the time when they took the action that they did, realized the tremendous repercussions which that action would cause in the world.

. . . . . It really was useless for the German Government to deny that they cherished any design against the independence of others, because by their action they had created suspicion which they could no longer allay. It seemed to us that unless some new stabilizing factor could be introduced into Europe, the dissolution of a large part of Europe might be imminent. It was in those circumstances that His Majesty's Government thought that it was their duty, in conjunction with France, to intervene and to try to supply this new stabilizing factor. It was necessary to act quickly because apprehensions of attack were acute in certain particular quarters and we felt, therefore, that it was not possible to wait while we endeavored to build up a system or combination to resist such attacks and we took the course which, I think, has been generally approved, of acting ourselves, and promptly, by giving assurances of support in the quarters where they would be most needed.

It will be seen from what I have said that the assurances which we gave, first to Poland and afterwards to Roumania and to Greece, were not the end of the measures that we had in mind. They were what one might call first-aid treatment given to avoid any further deterioration in the situation. It still remains to strengthen them by more permanent arrangements and to try and get more support for them from any other quarters that are able and willing to give that support. I want to make it clear that this policy is not a policy of lining up opposing blocs of Powers in Europe animated by hostile intentions towards one another and accepting the view that war is inevitable.

. . . . . It was not enough to give those assurances. We had to set ourselves to try and convince others, as well as ourselves, that we were in a position to make them good. That was necessary, not only for the confidence of those to whom the assurances were given, but for a wider circle. We have been debating this week the Military Training Bill. The broad principles contained in that Bill have, I think, been generally welcomed in the country, and they have been approved by the House of Commons. Undoubtedly there again, not merely the amount of the additional strength that we obtain from that measure, but the fact that it is contrary to everything that we have hitherto held to be cardinal in our policy in this matter, has produced an effect the whole extent of which, perhaps, it is difficult for us in this House to measure. It is not enough, again, to do all that we can in this country to back up our assurances. We were anxious to support them, or to obtain support for them, by the adhesion of other countries who, like ourselves, were interested in peace, but who were much nearer to the possible seat of trouble than we ourselves are. And so we entered upon the conversations with the Turkish

Government and with the government of the Soviet Union about which hon. Members have read so much in the last week and the week before.

In the case of Turkey, our discussions very speedily revealed such a similarity in our interests and in our outlook that the two governments were enabled to make the declaration of May 12,* a declaration which foreshadowed the conclusion of a definite long-term agreement of a reciprocal nature.

. . . . . Let me just observe in passing that we attach great importance to the reciprocal character of the agreements which we have made with Turkey and Poland. The right hon. gentleman spoke of the part that had been played by Russia in 1914. At that time Russia and Germany had a common frontier, and Poland did not exist. Now it is a satisfaction to think that, if we should become involved in war, there is that great, virile nation on the borders of Germany which under this agreement is bound to give us all the aid and assistance it can . . . . .

No. 304 The German Consul-General in New York to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

New York, May 25, 1939

A leading American business man on his return from Europe, confidentially expressed his opinion to friends that at the present time war threatened more from Great Britain than from Germany. He said that the British Government today were determined once and for all to put a stop to the continuous international tension, with its elements of danger to the security of the British Empire, and would take the first opportunity Germany gave to force a decision. This merely presumed the successful conclusion of the Pact with Soviet Russia. This confidential report was coupled with the recommendation to make business arrangements, appropriate to this situation, as soon as possible.

The business man is said to have mentioned September as a favorable time for British action, while other reports from Wall Street mention a later date, perhaps October.

A recent declaration of the British Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons, warning British business circles against further investment of capital in American securities, lest it should denude the British money market, is looked upon as a confirmation of these views by circles in close touch with Wall Street.

The same circles also consider the article, which has been published in the *Saturday Evening Post* by the American journalist, Demaree Bess, of

* Cf. No. 301.

Paris, as worthy of attention. According to this article, a high British naval officer stated as long ago as last winter that a deliberate provocation of Germany was Great Britain's only way out. This view, so Mr. Bess declares, has gained considerable ground in London since the establishment of the Bohemian Protectorate.

Borchers

No. 305 Speech by the Fuehrer in Cassel, June 4, 1939

Extract

(Translation)

. . . . . Twenty years ago a despicable Government was induced, under what appeared to them like irresistible pressure, to sign a document which attempted to foist on Germany the guilt of the War, then alleged to have been finally proven. Historical research, however, has long since proved this assertion to be a lie and a falsification. I myself have solemnly blotted out this signature which they gave against their better knowledge under the Versailles Dictate, and I have thus formally done honor to the truth.

But independently of that we must all bear one thing in mind, namely, that war-guilt is indissolubly bound up with war aims. No nation and no régime will wage war merely for war's sake. Only in the brains of perverse Jewish journalists can the idea be conceived that anybody could resort to war from motives of pure delight in killing and bloodshed. The decisive factor, however, is that the German Government not only had no war aims before 1914, but that even during the War itself, they could never formulate reasonable and precise war aims.

The Peace Treaty of Versailles, on the other hand, has made clear what were the real war aims of the British and French politicians who then advocated an encirclement policy, the theft of the German colonies, the annihilation of German trade, the destruction of the basis of German existence and therefore of German life, the abolition of German political importance and power—the same aims, therefore, which the British and French encirclement-advocates are pursuing today!

Unhappily there were, at that time, people in Germany who thought they ought to believe the extreme declarations made even in times of peace by British newspapers and British politicians about the necessity of depriving Germany of her colonies, and of destroying German commerce. Now, however, the Great War and the Peace Dictate of Versailles have taught the German nation a very different lesson.

What had been called products of the imagination and hatred of irresponsible propagandists was really the aim of British policy, namely,

the theft of the German colonies, the annihilation of German trade, the destruction of the German mercantile marine, the enervation and demolition of the Reich as a political factor of importance; that it to say, the political and physical extermination of the German people. These were the aims of the British policy of encirclement prior to the year 1914.

And it is good to remind ourselves that at that time the German Government were absolutely without aim and unfortunately also irresolute in the face of the intentions and war aims of our adversaries, which were later crystallized in the Peace Dictate of Versailles. Thus it came about that not only were there no German war aims, but that Germany had not even made the necessary preparations for war—not even to the extent of having prepared for effective defense. And this is perhaps Germany's greatest war-guilt, namely, the responsibility for having, by criminal neglect of German armaments, made it easier for her neighbors to propagate, and in the end to put into effect, the idea of the annihilation of Germany.

By means of objection, totally incomprehensible to us National Socialists today, reductions were made in vitally necessary armaments, even as late as 1912. Misplaced parsimony was exercised in voting ridiculously small grants, and honest soldiers opposed to these measures were dismissed, thus helping to strengthen the conviction of our enemies that they might after all risk a successful passage at arms with Germany. The fact that in addition to this, conscription of German men was enforced only to an insufficient degree, and that thus many hundreds of thousands of able-bodied men did not receive military training, an omission for which a high percentage of them had to pay with their lives when they were called up afterwards in a critical hour, merely serves to strengthen our impression of an inadequate Government and of the real responsibility not only for the outbreak of the war, but for its outcome in particular.

If, nevertheless, that same Great War became for us Germans the source of our proudest memories, it was not because of our armaments, which were extremely weak, or of our Government, who were inefficient —but exclusively because of that instrument so unique in its ultimate worth, namely, the German armed forces of that day, the Army, the Navy, and later the Air Force, which, although frequently far outnumbered by the enemy, were never equalled.

Comrades-in-arms, the retrospect and the memory of that glorious time must bring us all to the following firm conviction and resolution:

1. The conviction that the German nation can look back with the greatest pride on its past, and especially on the years of the Great War. As Fuehrer of the German nation, and as an ex-service man, I can never admit for a second that anybody in the ranks of our western opponents has the right to look upon or imagine himself as superior to us Germans.

Nor do I, on that account, suffer in the least from any sort of inferiority complex!

On the contrary, I see in the memory of the four years of war in which, thanks to a kindly Providence, I had the good fortune to participate, only a reason for the proudest confidence in my German people, and, as a soldier, in myself also. The years of the war have made me profoundly pacific in the sense that I recognize the frightful horrors of war, but also unshaken in my conviction of the value of the German soldier in the defense of our rights. I am not impressed, therefore, by threats from any quarter.

2. I, personally, and all of us, must from our experience at that time resolve never again to neglect the interests of our Reich and the nation with such criminal carelessness as was the case prior to the year 1914.

And I want to assure you, my old comrades-in-arms here and now, that even if British encirclement policy remains the same as it was before the Great War, Germany's defense policy has fundamentally changed. It has already changed in so far as, at the head of the German Reich and in charge of affairs, there is today no longer a civilian disguised as a major, but a soldier who perhaps sometimes may appear in civilian's dress! There are no Bethmann-Hollwegs in the German Government today.

I have taken care that all those who have anything at all to do with the Government must be genuine men and perfect soldiers. Should I, however, notice that any one of these men fails when put to the proof, then I shall remove him immediately from his position, whoever he be.

The Versailles Dictate of Peace was not the product of chance, it was the aim of those who had for years tried to encircle Germany and who had thus finally achieved their goal. We have no right at all to doubt that today the same policy is being pursued only with the purpose of achieving the same goal. It is, therefore, our duty to tell the nation the plain truth and to strengthen to the utmost the people's will and power for defense.

No. 306 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation in part)

London, June 7, 1939

According to Reuter, the statement which Mr. Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, made in the House of Commons to-day on the present state of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, runs as follows:

"For reasons which the House will appreciate it will not be possible to give day to day information as to the progress of the negotiations for

agreement between Great Britain, France and the Union of the Socialist Republics of Russia.

"A stage has, however, now been reached which enables me to supplement the statement which I made on May 24th.

"It appears from the last exchange of views with the Soviet Government that there is general agreement as to the main objects to be attained.

' The British Government have, I think, been able to satisfy the Soviet Government that they are in fact prepared to conclude an agreement on the basis of full reciprocity and have also made it clear that they are ready immediately without reserve to join with the French Government in giving the Union of the Socialist Republics of Russia full military support in the event of any act of aggression against her, involving her in hostilities with any European Powers.

"It is not intended that the full military support which the three Powers will agree to extend should be confined to cases of actual aggression on their own territory.

"It is possible to imagine various cases in which any one of the three Governments might feel that its security was indirectly menaced by the action of another European Power.

"These cases have been reviewed in detail and I hope it may be possible now to suggest a formula acceptable to the three Governments which having regard to the interests of other states will insure co-operation between those Powers in resistance to aggression.

"There remain one or two difficulties to be resolved, particularly the position of certain States which do not want to receive a guarantee on the ground that it would compromise their strict neutrality which they desire to preserve.

"It is manifestly impossible to impose a guarantee on States which do not desire it. But I hope that some means may be found by which this difficulty and any other points that may arise should not stand in the way of giving the greatest effect to the principle of mutual support against aggression.

"In order to accelerate the negotiations, it has been decided to send a representative of the Foreign Office to Moscow to convey to the British Ambassador there full information as to the attitude of the British Government on all outstanding points.

"I hope that by these methods it will be possible rapidly to complete the discussion which is still necessary in order to harmonize the views of the three Governments and so to come to an agreement."

By Order

von Selzam

No. 307 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, June 13, 1939

Today the British Ambassador immediately led our conversation to the anxious question, how one could get through the summer without conflict.

As we know, there has been talk in the press for some days about a report by Henderson, who desires that the negotiations for an agreement with Moscow should be speeded up. Without making any reference to such a report, Sir Nevile made a statement to the following effect: As long as London was carrying on negotiations with Moscow, conversations between London and Berlin were naturally impossible; if the pact with Russia were concluded, however, it might be easier to talk with Berlin.—By this statement Henderson evidently believed about the same thing the *Times* had said, namely that strength was perfectly compatible with readiness to negotiate; without strength Britain was perhaps not even a suitable partner for negotiations.

With reference to the British pact with Russia I made a few remarks to Henderson regarding its effect of promoting war, especially in Poland. The British policy was diametrically opposed to Sir Nevile's own theory, which he had repeatedly and openly pronounced: "Great Britain wanted the sea for herself, the European Continent could be left to Germany." Instead of this, Britain was now committing herself more and more on the Continent and permitting the Poles, for example, to gamble with the destiny of Great Britain. If there is any logic at all in Britain's policy, then, as I see it, it is that Britain is determined on a preventive war and is working in that direction.

Henderson appeared very sensitive to this remark. He asserted that there was no question of a will to war. He did not, indeed, defend the Anglo-Polish agreement as such, nor did he dispute Polish incalculability and obstinacy; but as usual, he attributed the about-face in London to the German entry into what remained of the Czech State. Finally, he touched once more upon the danger period of this summer.

In this connection he spoke of a readiness on the part of Great Britain to negotiate with Germany. Halifax evidently had in mind that the present state of tension could and must be terminated by means of discussion. Neither Britain nor Germany could or wished to continue to bear the burden of armament. The substance of a talk between the British and German Governments might be, how to put an end to the armaments race and revive economic exchange. The colonial question could also be discussed. I refrained from discussing these remarks in detail, and only said that we had already heard something similar from London through a different channel; but that I did not know what to make of such unsubstantiated remarks.

From the light, conversational manner of Henderson's statements one could conclude that he is not quite at ease about the British relationship with Poland, that he does not believe in the Russian pact, and that, moreover, he is greatly worried over the chances of a conflict in the summer of this year, because his responsibility as Ambassador to Berlin weighs heavily upon him.

Weizsäcker

No. 308 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, June 17, 1939

In a private conversation with me outside the Foreign Office yesterday, the French Ambassador expressed himself in terms similar to those used by Henderson some time ago. He was of opinion that once the Franco-British-Russian agreement was concluded, a diplomatic discussion could more easily be arranged between the Axis Powers and the Western Powers, than at the present time.

I expressed doubt regarding this, and said that it was futile to threaten us with the Russians and that we were an unsuitable target for threats. The method of intimidation produced in us the opposite of what was intended.

The Ambassador then elucidated his original remark by stating that it was much easier for two parties to talk after they had taken up a definite position, than if they began their discussion from an as yet undefined starting point.

I then told the French Ambassador that if there were a danger to peace it lay with the Poles, who saw fit to play fast and loose with their French and British friends.

Coulondre on his part doubted that the official Polish policy aimed at a conflict. He stated that the most important thing for the next few months would be the prevention of incidents which might irreparably jeopardize the general desire for peace on the part of the Governments.

Weizsäcker

No. 309 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, June 22, 1939

In the course of a banquet held in honor of Lord Halifax at the 1900 Club, both Mr. Winston Churchill and Lord Halifax made short

speeches, which dealt with foreign affairs. According to the report published by the Press Association, Mr. Churchill said among other things:—

". . . . . We have all, from various standpoints, accepted the policy which you and the Prime Minister have now proclaimed. If differences remain, they will only be upon emphasis and method, upon timing and degree.

"Naturally, I am a supporter of the foreign policy of His Majesty's Government. I thought a year ago that a grand alliance of peace seeking states, in harmony with the principle of the Covenant, to resist aggression, and willing to remove, where possible, legitimate grievances, would in fact give almost the certainty of peace.

"I cannot now feel the same assurance. . . . . .

. . . . . What has happened to bring us all together? It has been the flagrant and brutal manner in which the Munich Agreement has been torn to pieces by the Nazi Government of Germany."

The following passages from the speech of Lord Halifax are worthy of note:—

"We fully recognize that the world does not remain static. The way of human life is based on change. What does not change is dead. But unless change can be ordered, human life is impossible and ends by being itself destroyed, and therefore it is our policy, while always ready to admit the necessity of the adjustment of conflicting claims in a changing world, to declare in plain language our opposition to methods of force. . . . . .

"We are now, as is well known, and not without incurring criticism in some quarters, engaged in negotiations with the Soviet Government with a view to securing their cooperation on the same lines and for the same purpose. We believe that in that field the Soviet Government have the same interest and the same object as we have ourselves, and, as is not uncommon, the search for the right formula presents difficulties.

"But with the conviction that we are aiming at the same thing, and if we can succeed in dispelling distrust, I am confident we shall succeed in reaching agreement.

"We have gone further than many would have thought right in the endeavor to find agreement, and I think that if we have so far failed, we can truly feel that it has not been our fault."

Just as it took more than one to make a quarrel, so he was afraid it took more than one to make friends. However, if every attempt they made to improve relations was considered as weakness and was made the ground for new and bitter attacks, it was indeed hardly to be wondered at if many people formed the conclusion that the only argument which those who seemed to rely on force were likely to understand was that others should be not less ready than themselves to use force in self defense. The British people had now reached the point of possessing the three fundamental assets for a consistent foreign policy:

First, that the country was more united than at any time during recent years;

Secondly, that the country was quite clear in its own mind what was the great end to which that policy ought to be directed;

Thirdly, that it knew itself to be strong, and getting stronger.

By Order

von Selzam

No. 310 Franco-Turkish Declaration of Mutual Assistance, June 23, 1939

(Translation)

1. The French and Turkish Governments have entered into close consultation, and the discussions which have taken place beween them and which are still continuing, have revealed their customary identity of view.

2. It is agreed that the two countries will conclude a definitive long-term agreement of a reciprocal character in the interest of their national security.

3. Pending the completion of the definitive agreement, the French Government and the Turkish Government declare that in the event of an act of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean area, they would be prepared to co-operate effectively and to lend each other all aid and assistance in their power.

4. This declaration, like the proposed agreement, is not directed against any country, but is designed to assure France and Turkey of mutual aid and assistance should necessity arise.

5. It is recognized by the two Governments that certain matters, including the more precise definition of the various conditions which would bring the reciprocal engagements into operation, will require closer examination before the definite agreement can be completed. This examination is proceeding.

6. The two Governments recognize that it is also necessary to ensure the establishment of security in the Balkans and they are consulting together with the object of achieving this purpose as speedily as possible.

7. It is understood that the arrangements above mentioned do not preclude either Government from making agreements with other countries in the general interest of the consolidation of peace.*

Paris, June 27, 1939

Bonnet **Suad Davaz**

* Cf. No. 301.

No. 311 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Paris to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Paris, June 27, 1939

As reported in my telegram of March 24,* the press here announced at that time that while the President of the French Republic was in London, Mr. Chamberlain, Lord Halifax and M. Bonnet signed a protocol or exchanged aides-mémoires in which Britain and France pledged themselves, in the event of an attack on the Netherlands or Switzerland, automatically to give armed assistance and to protect the frontiers of these countries. The agreement thus concluded, it was stated, confirmed the verbal arrangements made in Paris on January 29, 1939, between M. Bonnet and the British Ambassador here. An investigation regarding the origin of these reports has yielded the following result:

In its issue of March 18, the *Europe Nouvelle* stated in its regular weekly review that on the evening of January 28 the British Ambassador had informed the French Government that Britain would resort to war in the event of an attack on the Netherlands, and he asked France to make a similar promise. On the afternoon of January 29 the French Government had complied with this British request. However, they asked the British Cabinet to give a similar promise to Switzerland which, as the French Government had reason to believe, was threatened by a similar surprise attack. On January 30 an affirmative answer had been received from London.

Representatives of several French newspapers, whom the President's visit had taken to London, reported that these verbal arrangements, made in January during M. Bonnet's London visit, had been confirmed in writing. As far as we are able to ascertain, a Havas report on the matter has not appeared.

Bräuer

No. 312 Speech by Lord Halifax, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, at Chatham House, London, June 29, 1939

Extract

When I look back to the speech I delivered at the Chatham House Dinner in June last year I am conscious, as we all are, of the great changes that have taken place. A year ago we had undertaken no specific commitments on the Continent of Europe beyond those which had then

* Cf. No. 276.

existed for some considerable time and were familiar to you all. Today we are bound by new agreements for mutual defense with Poland and Turkey, we have guaranteed assistance to Greece and Roumania against aggression, and we are now engaged with the Soviet Government in negotiations to which I hope there may very shortly be a successful issue with a view to associating them with us for the defense of States in Europe whose independence and neutrality may be threatened.

We have assumed obligations, and are preparing to assume more with a full understanding of their causes and with a full understanding of their consequences. We know that if the security and independence of other countries are to disappear, our own security and our own independence will be threatened. We know that if international law and order is to be preserved we must be prepared to fight in its defense.

In the past we have always stood out against any attempt by any single Power to dominate Europe at the expense of the liberties of other nations, and British policy is therefore only following the inevitable line of its own history if such an attempt were to be made again.

But it is not enough to state a policy. What matters is, firstly, to convince the nation that the policy is right, and secondly, to take the steps necessary for that policy to succeed.

I believe that at no time since the World War has there been such national unity on the main essentials of our foreign policy and that with this spirit of unity goes a deep and widespread determination to make that policy effective. But I believe, too, that among all classes of our people, who, in virtue of their common citizenship, are being called upon to defend their country and the causes for which it stands, there is an increasing desire to look beyond the immediate present and to see before them some goal for which they would willingly sacrifice their leisure and, if need be, their lives.

We already are asking for great sacrifices from all ages and classes in the call for national service. . . . . In one way or another every man and woman has a part to play and, I know, is prepared to do so.

The immense effort the country is making in equipping itself for defense at sea, in air and on land is without parallel in peace time. We have an unchallengeable navy. Our air force, still undergoing an expansion which has outstripped all the expectations of a few months ago, has now nothing to fear from any other. I have little doubt that its personnel, in spirit and in skill, is superior to all others. Our army, once derided, but which survived to prove its worth so that it made a boast of that derision, is undoubtedly small in comparison to that of some other countries. But, as happened once before, we are creating here also a powerful weapon for the defense of our own liberty and that of other peoples.

With every week that passes that effort gains momentum and on every side of life political, administrative industrial activity we have abundant evidence of how firmly this national effort is being supported by the

people's will. Behind all our military effort stands the British people, more united than ever before, and at their service their wealth and industrial resources. These, again, are the object of contemptuous reference, but they have been earned by the labor, skill and courage of our people.

None of this formidable array of strength will be called into play except in defense against aggression. No blow will be struck, no shot fired. Of the truth of that everyone in this country is convinced. I believe, myself, most people in other countries still accept it also in spite of the propaganda that dins into their ears to the contrary.

What is also now fully and universally accepted in this country, but what may not even yet be as well understood elsewhere, is that in the event of further aggression we are resolved to use at once the whole of our strength in fulfilment of our pledges to resist it. . . . . .

No. 313 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, June 29, 1939

General Gamelin's visit to London at the beginning of June served without doubt as an opportunity for discussing among other questions that of the common High Command.* On this occasion the various probable theatres of war (Western Europe, the Western Mediterranean, the Near East and the Far East) were discussed.

The final result is not known. One is justified in assuming, however, that the Chief Command in Western Europe will be placed in French hands. But the question of the Commander-in-Chief's responsibility to an inter-allied body has apparently not been settled yet. Questions asked in Parliament prove the great importance of Britain attaches. In the House of Commons on June 14 the Prime Minister confined himself to imparting only very guarded information on the subject, from which may be assumed that the question of the Command-in-Chief was not finally settled at that time. From what I hear, the French seem to have proved very difficult, making exaggerated claims, so that the British are by no means entirely satisfied.

The Staff consultations just concluded in Singapore must also be regarded as part of the negotiations with France. In these talks the use of British Naval and Air bases by France were discussed, as well as the question of the common Commander-in-Chief, who, in all probability, will be an Englishman. Here, too, no final decision has been heard of yet.

By Order

von Selzam

* M. Daladier, the French Premier, in his speech to the Chamber of Deputies on November 30, 1939, stated that the question of a common Commander-in-Chief had been settled prior to the outbreak of war.

No. 314 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, June 30, 1939

This afternoon, acting on instructions, I requested the French Ambassador to call on me.

After a few personal remarks the Ambassador turned the conversation to the general political situation. I replied by drawing his attention to the desperate British policy of encirclement, which was apparently intended to intimidate us, and naturally had the contrary effect. That concerned France also, although our press addressed most of its rebukes to Great Britain. To me the British illusion, that they could conjure away the alleged danger of war in Europe by negotiating with Moscow, was a source of profound astonishment.

When M. Coulondre passed on to the German-Polish problem, and once more looked at things from the gloomy side on account of certain reports on secret preparations in Danzig, I drew his attention to the excesses and to speeches made by prominent Poles, as for example General Kwásniewski's* belligerent speech today.

The Ambassador was obviously somewhat relieved when I said that, in my opinion, we were not on the eve of a tremendous eruption, unless it were provoked by Polish excesses. That would certainly mean *finis Poloniae.*

M. Coulondre thereupon remarked, as he had done before, that France would not be bound in the case of Polish provocation, but if war broke out on account of arbitrary actions on the part of Danzig, then neither France nor Great Britain could help being involved. It would be a great and tragic mistake to believe that France would stand aside in such a case, however terrible war would be for the whole of France.

In order to elicit further information, I said that I found it difficult to believe that Great Britain had, of a sudden, left the decision on war or peace for her whole Empire in the hands of a few people in Warsaw or in the Polish Corridor. M. Coulondre, however, stuck to his point that Great Britain and France no longer felt any confidence in international peace after March of this year, and therefore entered upon engagements of which they would formerly never have thought.

The Ambassador did not go so far as to suggest that Germany wished to settle accounts with Poland in the course of this year. He traced his worries rather to the threatening quasi-military preparations in Danzig, and also to the lack of self-control on the part of France's Polish friends.

I indicated that my remarks merely expressed my personal opinion, and that I reserved for the German Foreign Minister an authoritative statement on our point of view.

Weizsäcker

* Speech made by Brigadier-General Kwasniewski, President of the Marine and Colonial League, in Warsaw, June 29, on the occasion of the "Festival of the Sea."

No. 315 The German Ambassador in Ankara to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Therapia, June 30, 1939

I have learned from a reliable source that the British desire to pledge Turkey to guarantee Roumania's non-Balkan frontiers, too, in exchange for a British guarantee of the Thracian frontier. The same may be supposed to apply to Greece.

Papen

No. 316 The German Ambassador in Paris to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Paris, July 6, 1939

On the occasion of the annual banquet of the France-Grande-Bretagne Association of July 4, after Marquis de Vogüé, President of the Society, had spoken some introductory words of welcome, Mr. Hore-Belisha, British Secretary of State for War, who had come specially to Paris in order to be present on this occasion, and M. Bonnet, the French Foreign Minister, made speeches, in which they did homage to the unswerving Franco-British friendship. Mr. Hore-Belisha began by saying that although after the war the efforts of both the British and the French had been identical, and directed towards achieving the same objects, namely the prevention of domination by force in Europe, the methods of the two countries had been different. France had advocated a system of alliances, while Britain had up to the present declined to bind herself in advance. As developments had shown, the French policy had been justified, a fact now recognized by Great Britain. Now there was no longer a British and a French, but merely a common Anglo-French policy. In the further course of his speech the British Secretary of State for War specially stressed the close military co-operation, by virtue of which neither country kept any secrets from the other. General Gamelin had recently reviewed the British troops and General Gort would shortly attend the parade on July 14, in which a detachment of the British Army would also have the honor to take part. Britain and France were comrades-in-arms and would, if necessary, also die as such.

Unquestionably, France had the best-trained Army and Britain the mightiest Navy. By speeding up their production of aeroplanes, the two countries would finally possess the most modern and most powerful air

forces. In less than a year the British Army would number more than a million men. The medical examinations of the first 50,000 men for the new British Militia had proved that 97% were fit for military service. Who, in the face of this, still cared to talk about British decadence? Mr. Hore-Belisha concluded his speech with the statement that Britain could say to France and France to Britain:—We think alike, we have come to the same conclusions, we pursue the same ideal, we are friends, we are strong, and we shall be able to show a united front, come what may.

The speech by the French Foreign Minister was on the same lines but less vain, glorious and poetical than that of the loquacious British Secretary of State for War.

By Order

Bräuer

No. 317 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, June 10 1939

Roumania and the British Policy of Encirclement

The British policy of encirclement started simultaneously with a *démarche* by British representatives in various capitals on March 18. The manifest motive for this was the statement made by the Roumanian Minister in London on his own initiative and submitted to Lord Halifax, to the effect that Germany had made Roumania a proposal which had the character of an ultimatum.* According to this proposal, Roumania was to grant Germany a monopoly for her foreign trade and the control of her industry, in exchange for which Germany was to give guarantees with regard to Roumania's frontiers.

At the same time British circles in Bucharest are actively engaged in working against Germany, and are trying to counteract the German-Roumanian economic Treaty of March 23. This statement regarding an alleged German economic ultimatum was also exploited by the British, in spite of repeated denials on the part of Roumania.

In connection with the talks held on the occasion of the visit of M. Beck, Polish Foreign Minister, to London at the beginning of April, regarding the conclusion of the Anglo-Polish Agreement of Mutual Assistance,** one of the subjects dealt with was the question as to how the Roumanian-Polish Alliance, which up to that time was directed only against Soviet Russia, might also be made effective against an attack from the West. While in London, M. Beck agreed to enter into discussion on

* Cf. No. 270.
** Cf. No. 286.

this question with the Roumanian Government. Independently of these Polish-Roumanian talks, the British and French Governments on their part held out to the Roumanian Government the prospect of a guarantee of Roumanian independence. Upon the events in Albania, the British immediately determined to include Greece, likewise, among the States to be guaranteed. This led to a speeding up of the Roumanian guarantee plans also, with the result that on the afternoon of April 13 Mr. Chamberlain was able to tell the House of Commons,* and M. Daladier to inform the French press, of the simultaneous and identical Declarations of Assistance given to Greece and Roumania.

Roumania's attitude towards being involved in the encirclement operations has been officially defined to us more than once, to the effect that Bucharest did not desire to enter into reciprocal pacts, but if Great Britain and France were to give a unilateral declaration to Roumania, she could not evade it.

Great Britain thereupon tried indirectly by way of Turkey to draw Roumania still further into the net of the encirclement policy. Above all it has often been urged in Ankara that the Balkan States should also accept guarantees for their frontiers with non-Balkan States. How far Turkey was prepared for this transformation of the Balkan League is open to conjecture. At any rate, up to the present these attempts have been frustrated by the attitude of the remaining members of the Balkan League.

The efforts of Great Britain to coerce the Balkan League into collaboration in the encirclement policy, or at least to win over Turkey for the defense of the guaranteed countries, Greece and Roumania, are set forth in Point 6 of the Anglo-Turkish Agreement of May 12,** according to which Great Britain and Turkey "recognize that it is also necessary to ensure the establishment of security in the Balkans, and they are consulting together with the object of achieving this purpose as speedily as possible."

It has been stated in Turkish circles and elsewhere that this paragraph, quoted from the Anglo-Turkish Agreement, has no significance other than a reference to the already existing Balkan Pact, which was specifically intended to guarantee the security of the Balkan States. Roumania, however, seems to have no doubts with regard to the real significance of the Anglo-Turkish maneuver, at least she claims to have endeavored, although without success, to prevent the insertion of an analogous stipulation in the Franco-Turkish Agreement of June 23,*** Moreover, the Roumanian Foreign Minister, during his visit to Ankara in the middle of June, is said to have received assurance from the Turks that every provision appertaining to the Balkan States and their security would be eliminated from the final Anglo-Turkish Agreement.

* Cf. No. 283.
** Cf. No. 301.
*** Cf. No. 310.

On the occasion of this visit of M. Gafencu to Turkey, the latter also endeavored to promote the British policy of encirclement. M. Gafencu is said to have been approached with a view to concluding a Black Sea Pact. Great Britain and France are said to have insisted on Roumania's participation in the planned agreements with Russia; and finally, it is alleged that a suggestion had been made to extend the Balkan Pact against all aggressors. M. Gafencu asserts that he rejected all these suggestions. In any case, all rumors concerning the conclusion of new political and military arrangements during M. Gafencu's trips to Ankara and Athens were officially denied by Roumania.

Finally, it became known a short time ago that Great Britain had demanded of Turkey that, in case a guarantee should become effective, Turkey should enable Great Britain to render actual assistance to the States she had guaranteed, which should not be mentioned by name. This obviously means that Turkey, even though not attacked herself, should render it possible for Great Britain to pass through the Dardanelles in order to hasten to the assistance of Roumania.

It remains to be seen to what extent Roumania has been informed of these British plans, and what attitude she will adopt in a given case.

Heinburg

No. 318 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, July 12, 1939

At the beginning of this year, by virtue of the extended Export Credit Guarantees Act passed by Parliament, the Board of Trade was given the power to grant export credit guarantees up to the value of £10,000,000 without being bound to abide by the strictly economic instructions given to the Export Credit Guarantee Institute, provided the granting of such credits was compatible with national interests. At the time this did not cause much of a sensation. This political credit fund, which in British circles was sometimes called the "Reptile Fund," has steadily gained in importance as a result of the political events of the past few months. As may be perceived from the regular reports submitted by the Embassy, Great Britain's recent political and economic activities have brought delegations from Roumania, Greece and Poland to London with the purpose of obtaining credit. As is generally known, the Iraq Government recently received a £3,000,000 credit guaranteed by the Board of Trade. Although nothing definite is known here with regard to the new Turkish requests for credit, it would appear that Turkey had likewise asked for

additional credits. The requests for credit by New Zealand are of a somewhat different nature.

Although as yet no details are available with regard to the credits for which the above-mentioned fund of £10,000,000 has been used, it has, however, been evident for some time that the amount is absolutely insufficient in comparison with the financial demands submitted to the British Government by friendly States. As, on the one hand, the launching of a loan in London for the States desiring credit is impossible just now for political reasons connected with the money market, and, on the other hand, the purely economic export credit procedure excludes those particular exports which are of vital importance to those States, namely armament exports, the British Government have determined to increase the funds available for political credits.

On the 6th inst., the Government therefore introduced a bill in Parliament which severs the granting of political credits from the export guarantee procedure practiced hitherto, making such grants subject to a separate law, namely, the Overseas Guarantees Trade Act. This Bill gives the Board of Trade added power to grant political credits up to the sum total of £60,000,000. This amount does not include the interest payable in connection with such credits. The extent of the credit-granting powers vested in the Board of Trade may be considerably increased, depending on the length of the term of the credits granted and the rate of interest agreed upon. The financial power proper which is connected with the authority granted cannot, moreover, be rated as being equal to the above-mentioned nominal value, because the credits revolve and can, therefore, be renewed after expiration.

It is assumed that part of the guaranteed credits may run for a period not exceeding 15 years. In connection with this there is a further provision in the Bill according to which the Board of Trade are empowered to acquire for themselves treasury bills issued by foreign states. The procedure practiced hitherto, of placing the respective bonds on the British money market under the guarantee of the Board of Trade, would be very difficult as far as long-term bonds are concerned.

In accordance with the practice hitherto, credits are, as a matter of principle, granted only for orders to be placed in Great Britain. However, £6,000,000 of the new credits granted can be used as a credit guarantee for contracts for non-British products. The incidental expenses arising in the purchaser-country in connection with such British exports may also be included in the credit action, according to certain provisions laid down in the Bill.

The announcement of the Government's decision henceforth openly to adopt a policy of subsidies, has been received with great satisfaction by the British public. They make no secret of the fact that the aims pursued in this connection are primarily of a political nature, and that the credits to be granted are intended to be used by friendly States to place

orders for armaments with Great Britain. Another question is, to what extent the British armaments industry is, at the present time, in a position to execute extensive foreign orders, in addition to home orders placed in connection with the British rearmament program. It must not be overlooked, however, that in this connection the new British credit policy is intended to cover a fairly long period.

It is generally assumed here that the credits have been more or less disposed of already. It is expected that the principal beneficiary under the scheme will be Poland, whose financial negotiations with the British Government probably will be concluded shortly. Other applicants are Roumania, Greece and Turkey. According to today's press reports, credit agreements with the two former States have already been concluded. As there is no provision in the bill excluding the countries belonging to the British Commonwealth of Nations from the circle of beneficiaries, the conjecture, frequently expressed here, that New Zealand, too, will now benefit from the recently replenished credit fund, seems to be not unjustified.

The second reading of the bill will take place this week. The Government intend to get it passed before Parliament goes into recess, and it is not likely that they will encounter any difficulty in this connection.

By Order

Federer

No. 319 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, July 15, 1939

According to a report from a very reliable source, the fear of an arrangement between Germany and Russia, evinced in leading political circles here, has lately increased to a considerable degree. It is feared above all that the logical result of such a compromise would be an endeavor on the part of Poland to approach Germany now, since she can no longer reckon on the support of Russia.

From the point of view of home policy it is feared here that a German-Russian arrangement and a mitigation of the German-Polish controversy would cause unpleasant reactions, which would be exceedingly detrimental to the effects of the Government's election slogan. The voters would ask why the Government had for so many months encouraged a pro-war atmosphere, and had tried to build up a political front against Germany, in spite of the fact that there had ceased to be any inner justification for such a procedure, owing to the development of a calmer atmosphere in the relations of Germany towards Russia and Poland respectively.

Dirksen

No. 320 The German Ambassador in Ankara to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Therapia, July 18, 1939

While the British Military Mission here, as I have ascertained, dealt only with the question of supplies, the French Military Mission, which arrived here yesterday under the leadership of General Huntzinger, intends to discuss strategical problems in detail.

Papen

No. 321 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, July 19, 1939

The Turkish Military Mission is still in England. At midday on Sunday July 16, three more Turkish officers arrived at Victoria Station. They were received by members of the Turkish Commission and by the Turkish Military Attaché.

The Air Attaché at the British Air Ministry has been officially informed of this increase in the Turkish Delegation.

The Turkish Military Commission is inspecting military institutions, arms and equipment here. Up to the present no authentic reports regarding the course of the negotiations proper are available. All that is known is that orders to the value of £5,000,000 have been placed here, to be charged against the £6,000,000 credit granted a year ago.

By Order

von Selzam

No. 322 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

London, July 25, 1939

Two statements appeared in the daily newspapers on July 6, to the effect that:

1. Reservists would be called up during the next three or four months for maneuvers with the Air Force.

2. Extensive trial flights by Air Force squadrons would be undertaken to the Continent and especially to France.

3. It appears from further press reports that some of the conscripts now called up will be transferred for training and service with the Royal Air Force.

The first long-distance non-stop trial flight, in which twelve squadrons participated, took place on Tuesday, July 11, and extended partly as far as Le Havre and partly as far as Bordeaux.

The second trial flights of this kind took place on July 21, ten squadrons (some hundred machines) participating. They flew in three groups, as follows:—

First Group:

Approximately three squadrons of "Blenheims" which flew from their home ports following the route Paris, Orleans to Chartres and back; distance covered approximately 700 miles; flying time, 3 hours.

Second Group:

Two squadrons of "Armstrong Withleys." Course of flight via Paris to the town of Avallon (half-way between Paris and Lyons); distance covered, approximately 750 miles.

Third Group:

Five squadrons of "Wellingtons." Course of flight from the home ports via Dover, Paris, Auxerre, Lyons, to Marseilles and back; distance covered 1,500 miles, during which, according to the newspaper reports, an average speed of 180 m. p. h. was attained. Captain Balfour, Under-Secretary of State for Air, flew as a member of the crew in one of these machines.

There is, in itself, nothing suspicious in the fact that sections of the British Air Force are engaged in practice flights on a pretentious scale. The fact, however, that such practice flights are taking place at this time and are, moreover, given such prominence by the entire press as an event of outstanding importance, gives food for reflection.

Two points of view may be given as reasons for this:—

1. The practice flights are intended to demonstrate to the world that the British Air Force is ready for action.

In all ranks of the British public the firm conviction prevails that within the next two months Germany will act in connection with the Danzig question, which, in case such action were carried through without negotiations and by means of military pressure, would inevitably oblige Great Britain to render assistance.

In contrast to last September, general public opinion definitely favors such assistance on the part of Great Britain, even though rearmament may not yet be completed. Serious-minded people, of whom there are many, at least in London, are oppressed by the idea of this guarantee of assistance as by a nightmare, since, from a purely military point of view, it is considered most difficult to fulfil such an obligation without an alliance with a militarily strong Russia.

The object of the present military maneuvers of every description is to prove Britain's strength and readiness for action. It is also hoped that such measures will make a certain impression on Germany which might bring about a solution of the Danzig question by peaceful means instead of by force.

2. It is intended that by these practice flights the British Air Force should attain a high degree of readiness for action. In the course of the past and the current years several changes have been made in the organization of the Air Force and the Force has also been increased. Like all changes, such measures necessarily impair the value of a fighting force for the time being. Many flights have been equipped with new types of aeroplanes and have been attached to a different command. The whole apparatus must now be made to run smoothly, and the best way to accomplish this is by means of practice flights. There is no doubt that the military maneuvers will be concluded on war-like lines; this fact has already been made evident by the calling-up of reservists.

The method by which the first practice flights were carried out is most interesting. For the time being, the flights can be made only to France, because Great Britain is too small for long-distance flights. Oversea flights in large formations are undertaken only reluctantly, perhaps on account of difficulties connected with air security service.

The goal of practice flights is, after all, fairly immaterial, so that, generally speaking, these flights may be regarded as a preparation for long-range action. On the other hand, it must not be overlooked that at the same time such practice flights can be combined with flights made in preparation for mobilization. It would, in the event of mobilization, naturally be an advantage if, as a result of practice flights, the units had become familiar with their respective routes.

By Order

von Selzam

No. 323 The German Ambassador in Paris to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Paris, July 28, 1939

From sources usually well-informed I have heard the following in regard to the Moscow negotiations:

I. If Britain and France are not only ready now to engage in military talks prior to the conclusion of a political treaty, but also display particular zeal for these talks, there are three definite reasons to account for this:

1. Britain and France want to avoid at any cost the postponement or breaking-off of the negotiations, because they believe that, as long as negotiations are being carried on, Germany will not undertake anything in Danzig. Political negotiations had reached a certain satisfactory stage after agreement had been arrived at on all points apart from the definition of indirect aggression and the details regarding the rendering of assistance. So many military considerations are involved in the last point that it is impossible to proceed further without simultaneous military talks.

2. By sending two representative military missions to Moscow, it is hoped to create an atmosphere favorable to the conclusion of a political treaty as well.

3. By means of a possible understanding to be arrived at between the military representatives, the politicians further hope to exert pressure with the object of overcoming the final difficulties, although it is felt that in military discussions Russia will broach not only the problem of the Border States, but also the awkward problem of tolerating military assistance by Poland and Roumania.

II. The conclusion of an Anglo-Japanese Agreement is said to have been utilized by the British in the course of the Moscow negotiations in the following manner:—

Great Britain paid dearly for the negotiations over Tientsin by a limited recognition of Japanese interests in China for the duration of the conflict. Britain was forced to do this because she wished to be unhampered in Europe until the Moscow negotiations had resulted in the conclusion of a treaty. Failing this, Great Britain would find herself in a difficult position in the Far East, and Russia would, in the long run, be exposed to steadily growing pressure on the part of Japan.

III. The existence of the German-Russian Agreement of 1926 is said to have been discussed by the French and British in connection with the

Moscow negotiations. The question has been investigated as to whether Russia could be requested to denounce the Agreement or to declare its irrelevance. Discussion of this question, however, has apparently been postponed in order to avoid making the negotiations still more difficult.

IV. The head of the French Military Mission which is already being formed is to be General Doumenc, Chief of the 2nd Region in Lille. He belongs to the Artillery and has the reputation of being an officer of outstanding capability. During the Great War he was the organizer of motorization and, before taking over the Front Command in Lille, where he was at first in charge of the 1st Division, he was Acting Chief-of-Staff under General Weygand.

Welczeck

No. 324 The German Minister in Sofia to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Sofia, July 31, 1939

Turkey's military preparations on the Turko-Bulgarian frontier continue to be watched here with great attention. According to a reliable report the Turks intend to increase the strength of the Turkish forces in Thrace still further, up to 15 divisions. It is said that the reinforcements will include a French division, which in the event of conflict would be transferred from Syria. The Dardanelles are, it is rumored, to be defended by three divisions under a British commander-in-chief.

There are no further reports on the visit of Prince-Regent Paul to London or on the conversations in which he took part there, except that the British had told the Prince-Regent that in case of emergency, Yugoslavia could rely on the protection of Great Britain.

Leading Bulgarian politicians are sneering at these numerous promises of assistance which Great Britain so generously offers.

Frhr. von Richthofen

CHAPTER THREE

Germany's Efforts to Secure Peaceful Relations With Her Neighbors

No. 325 Extract from a Speech by the Fuehrer to the Reichstag, January 30, 1937

(Translation)

. . . . . During recent years Germany has entered into political relations with quite a number of other states. She has resumed former relations and improved them. And I may say that she has established close friendship with a number of states. Our relations with most of the European states are normal from our point of view, and we are on terms of close friendship with quite a number of states. Among all these diplomatic connections I would give a special rank to the excellent relations we have with those states which had to endure sufferings similar to those we ourselves had to endure, and have consequently arrived at similar conclusions. Through a number of agreements which we have made, we have removed former tensions and thereby made a substantial contribution towards an improvement in European conditions.

. . . . . Germany has steadily given her assurance, and I solemnly repeat this assurance here, that between ourselves and France, for example, there are no humanly conceivable grounds for quarrel. Furthermore, the German Government have assured Belgium and Holland that they are ready at any time to recognize and guarantee these states as neutral and inviolable realms. . . . . .

No. 326 Extract from a Speech by the Fuehrer in the Sportpalast, Berlin, September 26, 1938

(Translation)

. . . . . Immediately after the return of the Saar Territory to Germany, which was decided by a plebiscite, I made a declaration to France that there were no longer any differences whatever between us. I declared that for us the question of Alsace-Lorraine no longer existed. It is border territory. In point of fact, the population of this territory has, during the past few decades, never been asked to express its own opinion.

We feel that the inhabitants of this province would be happiest if there were no more fighting about them.

None of us want war with France. We want nothing from France —nothing at all!

When, thanks to the just interpretation of the treaties by France, which I feel called upon to recognize, the Saar Territory had returned to the Reich, I gave the following solemn assurance:—all territorial differences between France and Germany have now been settled. I can today conceive of no further differences between us!

Here are two great nations wanting to work and to live, and they will live the better for working together! . . . . .

No. 327 Conversation Between the German Foreign Minister and the French Ambassador

Memorandum

(Translation)

Berlin, November 20, 1938

At noon today I received the newly appointed French Ambassador, M. Coulondre, who paid me his introductory visit.

M. Coulondre declared that on accepting his post he had determined to do all he could to bring about the best possible German-French relations. He personally was in no sense prejudiced, and his mind was open to all suggestions.

I replied to M. Coulondre that unfortunately many opportunities of bringing about a fundamental improvement in German-French relations had been missed. In this connection I referred to the intended visit of the French Premier, M. Daladier, contemplated as early as 1933, but not carried out, and added that I had frequently told former Ambassador François Poncet, that an understanding between Germany and France would be a much simpler matter once a certain mental ballast had been thrown overboard. What was required was that the European states should confine themselves to their real interests—France, for instance, to her large colonial Empire, Great Britain to her Empire, and Germany to her own proper sphere of interest, South Eastern Europe. Once this was clearly realized, German-French relations would grow steadily better and more durable, for the German people harbored just as little resentment against France as the French people against Germany, which was only natural, as there existed no vital points of variance between the two nations.

M. Coulondre agreed with what I had said, stating that he viewed the question in exactly the same way.

von Ribbentrop

No. 328 Interview Given by the German Foreign Minister to a Representative of the "Paris Soir", December 5, 1938

Extract

(Translation)

Many Frenchmen should know that for a long time I have been seeking and working for an understanding with France. No one was more pleased than I when the Fuehrer, after the National Socialists' assumption of power, took the view that a rapprochement with France was the

primary condition for the appeasement of Europe. The German people gladly followed him, for they have nothing against the French, just as the French people, whom I think I know well, have nothing against the Germans.

The great respect felt by the German combatants for the French combatants was born of the War. This respect is a favorable soil for all understanding and for this reason during the last few years no one has worked harder for a rapprochement between our two nations than the former combatants.

I am sure that there are no vital questions between France and Germany that cannot be settled in an amicable manner. France has friends just as Germany has. Why should it not be possible to build a bridge between these friends in order to find a basis which can only be of advantage to all countries concerned? . . . . .

No. 329 German-French Declaration, December 6, 1938

(Translation)

Herr Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs, and M. Georges Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs, acting in the name and by order of their Governments, have at their meeting in Paris, on December 6, 1938, agreed as follows:—

1. The German Government and the French Government fully share the conviction that peaceful and neighborly relations between Germany and France constitute one of the most essential elements for the consolidation of the situation in Europe and the maintenance of general peace. The two Governments will in consequence use all their efforts to ensure the development in this direction of the relations between their countries.

2. The two Governments recognize that between the two countries there is no territorial question outstanding, and they solemnly recognize as final the frontiers between their countries as they now exist.

3. The two Governments are resolved, while leaving unaffected their particular relations with other Powers, to remain in contact with regard to all questions concerning their two countries, and mutually to consult, should the later evolution of those questions lead to international difficulties.

In token whereof the representatives of the two Governments have signed the present Declaration, which comes into immediate effect.

Done in duplicate in the French and German languages at Paris, December 6, 1938.

Joachim von Ribbentrop
Foreign Minister

Georges Bonnet
Foreign Minister

No. 330 Official German Communiqué, December 6, 1938

(Translation)

The German Foreign Minister's visit to Paris on December 6 has provided the opportunity for a wide German-French exchange of views. In the course of the conversations Herr von Ribbentrop and M. Georges Bonnet proceeded to examine the principal European problems, and, more particularly, those directly concerning political and economic relations between Germany and France. Both parties agreed that the development of relations between the two countries on the basis of the formal recognition of their frontiers would not only serve their common interests, but would constitute an essential contribution to the maintenance of peace.

It is in this spirit that the Foreign Ministers of the two countries have signed a declaration which, while leaving unaffected the particular relations of the two Governments with other Powers, expresses their intention of peaceful collaboration in a spirit of mutual respect, thereby marking an important step along the road to general appeasement.

No. 331 Statement Made by the German Foreign Minister to the Press, Paris, December 6, 1938

(Translation)

With today's declaration, France and Germany, bearing in mind the solid basis of their friendships with other states, have agreed to put an end to their centuries-old boundary dispute, and, in reciprocally recognizing their frontiers, to clear the way for a mutual recognition of and consideration for their vital national interests. As partners with full equality of rights, two great nations declare themselves ready, after serious differences in the past, to establish good neighborly relations for the future. With this declaration of their intentions, they express the conviction that there does not exist between them any real difference of vital importance, such as might justify a serious conflict.

The economic interests of the two countries are complementary. The spiritual life of Germany has drawn valuable inspirations from France, just as Germany, on her side, has frequently enriched French spiritual life. The respect which the German people and the French people gained for each other by their courage during the World War should, in time of peace, find its natural complement and grow even stronger, thanks to the magnificent efficiency which distinguishes both peoples in their daily work.

I am convinced that today's German-French Declaration will help to remove historical prejudices, and that the improvement in our neighborly relations expressed by this declaration, will earn not only the unanimous

approvals of the governing circles, but also of the peoples of our two states.

The views of the German people on a reorientation of the relations between the two states were made clear by the warm welcome extended to M. Edouard Daladier, the French Premier, at Munich. The evidence of good will which I have witnessed in the few hours that I have been in Paris show, also, the extent to which the French people share these feelings.

I hope that today's declaration will mark the beginning of a new era in the relations between our two peoples.

No. 332 Statement Made by M. Bonnet, French Foreign Minister, to the Press, Paris, December 6, 1938

(Translation)

I should like, first of all, to greet the Foreign Minister of the German Reich, whom we are very happy to welcome, and whose presence here emphasizes the importance of the document we have just signed.

The efforts of the French Government, like those of all their predecessors, have always aimed, with the same sincerity, at the maintenance and the organization of peace. To put relations between France and Germany on a Good-Neighbor basis, and to express a common will to develop those peaceful relations are essential elements in such an endeavor.

That is why I am particularly pleased with the signing of this Franco-German Declaration which, by solemnly recognizing the existing frontiers, puts an end to a long historical struggle and opens the road to collaboration which is facilitated by the conviction that between the two countries there exists no difference such as might jeopardize the peaceful basis of their relations.

This conviction is strengthened by the great value which both nations set upon the intellectual intercourse that has always existed between the two countries, and by the mutual esteem felt by two peoples who have measured each other's heroism during the Great War, and are now resolved to work together in a spirit of confidence and of peace.

Moreover, I have no doubt that this declaration will make an important contribution—the full value of which the future will confirm—towards general appeasement. It marks a particularly important stage in the task of reconciliation and co-operation with which France ardently desires to see all other peoples associated.

No. 333 The German Foreign Minister to the Belgian Minister

(Translation)

Berlin, October 13, 1937

Your Excellency,

In the name of the German Government I have the honor of making the following communication to Your Excellency:

"The German Government have taken cognizance, with special interest, of the public declarations made by the Belgian Government with regard to the clarification of the international position of Belgium.

The German Government, for their part, have repeatedly given expression to their attitude on this subject, especially through the declaration of the German Chancellor in his speech on January 30, 1937.*

On the other hand, the German Government have taken notice of the Declaration of His Britannic Majesty's Government and of the French Government made on April 24, 1937.**

In view of the fact that the conclusion of a treaty designed to replace the Pact of Locarno may still take a considerable time, and in the desire to strengthen the peaceful efforts of the two countries, the German Government regard it as appropriate to define now, in precise terms, their position towards Belgium.

To this end they make the following declaration:

1. The German Government have taken official notice of the attitude to which the Belgian Government, on their own authority, have given expression, namely:

(a) That they propose to follow, in full exercise of their own sovereignty, a policy of independence;

(b) That they are resolved to defend the frontiers of Belgium against any attack and any invasion, with all their forces; to prevent the use of Belgian territory for an attack against any other country, either as a passage-way for military forces (*Durchmarschland*), or as a base for operations by land, sea, or air; and to this end, to organize the defense of Belgium in effective fashion.

2. The German Government hold that the inviolability and integrity of Belgium are common interests of the Western Powers. They confirm their decision not to impair this inviolability and integrity under any

* Cf. No. 325.

** Joint Note, dated April 24, 1937, submitted by the British and French Ambassadors in Brussels to the Belgian Foreign Minister, by which Belgium was released from her obligations under the Locarno Pact and also under the London Agreement of March 19, 1936, and in which the British and French Governments at the same time reaffirm their promise of assistance.

circumstances, and to respect Belgian territory at all times, except, of course, in the event of Belgium's taking part in a military action directed against Germany in an armed conflict in which Germany is involved.

3. The German Government, like the British Government and the French Government, are prepared to render assistance to Belgium in the event of that country's being subjected to an attack or an invasion."

I have the honor, etc.

Frhr. von Neurath

No. 334 The Belgian Minister to the German Foreign Minister

(Translation)

Berlin, October 13, 1937

Your Excellency,

In the name of my Government I have the honor of making the following communication to Your Excellency:

His Majesty's Government have, with great satisfaction, taken official notice of the declaration which has been transmitted to them today by the German Government. They express to the German Government their warmest thanks for it.

I have the honor, etc.

Vicomte Jaques Davignon

No. 335 The German Minister at The Hague to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

The Hague, March 22, 1937

On March 17, at a meeting of the First Chamber to consider the budget of the Foreign Ministry, Minister de Graeff made a noteworthy speech. The following is a report of the exposition made by the Minister concerning the German guarantee-offer and the West Pact. I shall submit a separate report on the other parts of his speech, especially in so far as it deals with the reorganization of the League of Nations. Mynheer de Graeff began his speech by stating that, as the debate had shown, the First Chamber in its totality agreed to the reply which the Dutch Government had given to the offer of a guarantee to the Netherlands, as contained in the Fuehrer's speech of January 30. This answer was merely the confirmation of a political line of action followed all along. As long

as the Netherlands did not by their own actions jeopardize the inviolability of their territory, such inviolability was a foregone conclusion and a matter which could not be more exactly defined or stipulated in any treaty with any foreign Power. Nevertheless, the good intentions of the Head of the German State had been specially appreciated by the Netherlands Government. Such utterances could only tend to increase the feeling of security existing in the Netherlands. Yet on the other hand, paradoxical though it might sound, they imposed upon the Netherlands the obligation of keeping their defense forces up to the mark. The Netherlands could pursue a policy of independence only if they proved their readiness to defend themselves with all their might against any attack. If it were realized abroad that the Netherlands were ready and in a position to prevent foreign troops from marching through their territory, or, at least, to offer serious opposition to such an attempt, strategic considerations might well induce others to refrain from dragging the Netherlands into a conflict.

To revert to the concrete question of the German offer of a guarantee, the reason for the reply given by the Netherlands was that the matter was one which could not be suitably dealt with in a treaty. It was necessary to avoid the impression that the Netherlands harbored any doubts as to the inviolability of their territory. Moreover, the conclusion of a treaty meant the acceptance of obligations on both sides, and the Netherlands could not assume obligations of any kind. For the rest, the point of view of the Netherlands had been fully understood and appreciated by the German Government.

Zech

No. 336 The German Minister at The Hague to the Foreign Office

(Translation)

The Hague, October 28, 1937

The N. S. B. Deputy of the First Chamber, van Vessem, who after the Fuehrer's speech of January 30th of the current year had already addressed a question to the Government concerning a possible German Declaration of guarantee for the Netherlands, has been prompted by the German Declaration of guarantee for Belgium to reopen the matter by a question in the Chamber. In effect he asked whether the Dutch Government still adhered to their disinclination to accept, and if so, whether this might not create the impression that Dutch territory was at Europe's disposal as a battlefield.

Foreign Minister Patiyn replied that the Government were still of the opinion that the inviolability of Dutch territory was an axiom which could not be the subject of an arrangement to which the Netherlands

themselves were a party. But, even after the German-Belgian Agreement, and the British and French declarations preceding it, it was impossible, in the opinion of the Government, that this unchanged attitude should produce the impression that Dutch territory was at Europe's disposal as a battlefield.

Zech

No. 337 The State Secretary at the Foreign Office to the German Diplomatic Representatives

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, April 28, 1938

As a consequence of the re-union of Austria with the Reich, we now have new frontiers with Italy, Yugoslavia, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Hungary. These frontiers are regarded by us as final and inviolable. On this point the following special declarations have been made:—

1. Italy

The Fuehrer and Chancellor in his Reichstag speech of March 18, 1938 referred to the letter he had addressed to Signor Mussolini on March 11, 1938, and pointed out that he had there assured Signor Mussolini "that not only will there be no change in the German attitude toward Italy after this event, but Germany will recognize the then existing frontiers with Italy as final, as she does the frontiers with France."

In the same Reichstag speech the Fuehrer also made the following declaration: "We know what Mussolini's attitude has meant for Germany in these days. If German-Italian relations could be made more secure, this has now been done. What was a bond based on our common political outlook and interests has become for us Germans an indissoluble friendship. For us, the territory and the frontiers of this our friend are inviolable. I repeat that I shall never forget this attitude of Mussolini's! As for the Italian people, let them know that my word is backed by the German nation!"

2. Switzerland

On March 14 the German Minister at Berne reminded Federal Councillor Motta of the assurance of Swiss independence and inviolability, which he, the Minister, shortly after assuming office, had been empowered by the Fuehrer and Chancellor to transmit to Herr Motta. In effect these assurances amounted to a repetition of the well-known declaration by the Fuehrer and Chancellor, made to Herr Schulthess, former Federal Councillor, on February 23, 1937, the gist of which is contained in the sentence:— "Come what may, we shall always respect Switzerland's inviolability and neutrality." On March 15 the Swiss Government in-

formed the Swiss press of these statements which the German Minister had made to Herr Motta. The entire press then published them, though in some cases not quite accurately.

3. Yugoslavia

The Yugoslav Government have been informed by competent German authorities that German policy has no aims beyond Austria, and that the Yugoslav frontier would in any case remain untouched. The Fuehrer and Chancellor stated, in his speech at Graz on April 3, that Yugoslavia and Hungary had adopted the same attitude as Italy toward the re-union of Austria. We were happy to have frontiers there which relieved us of all anxiety about their military protection.

4. Hungary

The Hungarian Government have been informed by our Minister at Budapest that the declarations made to Italy, Yugoslavia, and Switzerland concerning the new frontiers were, of course, equally valid for the new German-Hungarian frontier. With our concurrence, M. Kánya, the Hungarian Foreign Minister, pointed out in his speech before the Foreign Committees of the House of Deputies and the Upper House on March 23, that the Government of the Reich had left no doubt whatever that they considered the present German-Hungarian frontier just as inviolable as the German frontiers with Yugoslavia, Italy, and Switzerland.

Weizsäcker

No. 338 Address by the Fuehrer in Rome, May 7, 1938

Extract

(Translation)

Duce,

. . . . . Last autumn, on the Maifeld in Berlin, you proclaimed in these words the ethical principle sacred to you and Fascist Italy: "Speak plainly and frankly, and if you have a friend, march with him to the end."

In the name of National-Socialist Germany I, too, acknowledge this rule. Today I give you this answer:

Two thousand years have now passed since Romans and Germans met for the first time in history as we know it. Standing here on this the most venerable soil known to humanity, I realize the tragedy of a fate which for so long has failed to draw a clear frontier between these great and gifted races. This fact caused untold suffering for generations.

Now, after almost two thousand years, thanks to your historic efforts, Benito Mussolini, the Roman State rises out of dim traditions to new life. To the north of you a new Germanic Empire has grown up out of countless tribes.

In the light of the experience of two thousand years, now that we have become immediate neighbors, we both acknowledge those natural frontiers which Providence and history have visibly drawn between our two peoples. They will give Italy and Germany not only the possibility of peaceful and permanent collaboration through a clear division of their spheres of life, but also a bridge for mutual help and support.

It is my irrevocable will and my legacy to the German people, that for these reasons the frontier of the Alps, which Nature has erected between us, shall be regarded for ever as inviolable. I know that thus a great and prosperous future will ensue for Rome and Germania.

Duce,

Just as you and your people have kept your friendship with us in decisive moments, so I and my people are willing to show Italy the same friendship in times of stress. . . . . .

No. 339 Statement Made by the Fuehrer on the Occasion of His Interview with Herr Schulthess, Former Member of the Swiss Federal Council, Berlin, February 23, 1937*

(Translation)

The continued existence of Switzerland is a European necessity. We desire to live as good neighbors on the best terms with her and to come to fair agreements on all matters. In my recent Reichstag speech, when I spoke of the neutrality of two other countries, I intentionally refrained from mentioning Switzerland because the traditional neutrality which she practises and which has always been recognized by the Powers including ourselves, is in no way questioned. At all times, whatever may happen, we shall respect the inviolability and neutrality of Switzerland. I say this most definitely. I have never given cause for any other view.

No. 340 Address by the Fuehrer on the Occasion of the Dinner in Honor of the Prince-Regent of Yugoslavia, June 1, 1939

Extract

(Translation)

. . . . . German friendship for the Yugoslav people is not merely spontaneous; it acquired depth and durability during the tragedy of the Great War. The German soldier learned to know and respect his gallant

* On June 14, 1938, the Fuehrer reaffirmed to Herr Frochlicher, the newly appointed Swiss Minister, the determination of the Reich to respect the neutrality of Switzerland in any and every circumstance.

opponent in the field, and I believe that this respect was mutual. This mutual respect is finding its confirmation in common political, cultural and economic interests. In Your Royal Highness's visit we see just another convincing proof of the justice of our view, and also gain from it the hope that the friendship between Germany and Yugoslavia will continue to develop and become ever closer.

We regard Your Highness's presence as a welcome opportunity for a frank and friendly exchange of opinions which, I am convinced, can only be of advantage to our two peoples and states. I am all the more convinced of this, as firmly established relations of mutual confidence between Germany and Yugoslavia (since historic events have made us neighbors with common frontiers fixed for ever) will serve not only to ensure permanent peace between our two peoples and countries, but over and above that will constitute a factor of pacification for our sorely troubled continent. This peace, however, is the aim of all those who desire to do really constructive work. . . . . .

No. 341 The State Secretary at the Foreign Office to the German Minister in Budapest

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, March 18, 1938

For the good wishes expressed through you and the Hungarian Minister here on the occasion of the reunion of Austria with the Reich, I beg you to express most heartfelt thanks to the Regent in the name of the Fuehrer and Chancellor, and also to the Hungarian Government in the name of the German Government.

During his visit yesterday the Hungarian Minister spoke to me about the assurances we had given to our Swiss, Italian and Yugoslav neighbors concerning their respective frontiers after the reunion of Austria with the Reich, whereas Hungary had not as yet received any such assurance. Expressly stating that he had no instructions on this matter from his Government, he declared that such an assurance would be warmly welcomed in Budapest. I request you when complying with the above instructions to assure M. von Kánya, in the name of the German Government, that what applies to Switzerland, Italy and Yugoslavia naturally holds good for the new German-Hungarian frontier also.

Mackensen

No. 342 Treaty Between Germany and Lithuania, March 22, 1939

(Translation)

The Chancellor of the German Reich and the President of the Lithuanian Republic have decided to conclude a State Treaty reuniting the Memel district with the German Reich, thereby clarifying the questions pending between Germany and Lithuania and thus opening the way for the formation of friendly relations between the two countries.

For this purpose, plenipotentiaries have been appointed as follows:

By the Chancellor of the German Reich—the Foreign Minister, Herr Joachim von Ribbentrop;

By the President of the Republic of Lithuania—the Foreign Minister, Mr. Juozas Urbsys, and the Minister in Berlin, Mr. Kazys Skirpa. After exchange of their full powers found in good and due form, they agreed on the following provisions:

Article 1

The Memel district, separated from Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, is reunited from this day onward with the German Reich.

Article 2

The Memel district will be immediately evacuated by the Lithuanian military and police forces. The Lithuanian Government will see to it that the territory remains in an orderly condition in the course of evacuation.

Both parties will appoint commissioners, in so far as this is necessary to carry out the handing over of the administrations which are not in the hands of the autonomous authorities of the Memel district.

The settlement of the remaining questions arising from the change in sovereignty, especially of the economic and financial problems, questions of officialdom and questions of citizenship, will be reserved for a special agreement.

Article 3

To give consideration to the economic needs of Lithuania, a Free Port zone in Memel will be provided for Lithuania. Details will be settled according to the principles laid down in the appendix to this treaty.

Article 4

To strengthen their decision to secure the friendly development of relations between Germany and Lithuania, both parties pledge themselves neither to resort to force against one another nor to support the use of force against one of the parties by a third party.

Article 5

This Treaty goes into effect at the time of signing.

In faith whereof, the plenipotentiaries of the two parties have signed this treaty.

Done in two original documents in the German and Lithuanian languages respectively.

Berlin, March 22, 1939.

Joachim von Ribbentrop **Urbsys** **Skirpa**

No. 343 Extract from the Speech by the Fuehrer to the Reichstag, April 28, 1939

(Translation)

. . . . . 18. Finally, Mr. Roosevelt asks that assurances be given him that the German armed forces will not attack, and above all not invade, the territory or possessions of the following independent nations. He then names as those coming into question: Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain, Ireland, France, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Poland, Hungary, Roumania, Yugoslavia, Russia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Iraq, Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Iran.

My answer: I took the trouble to ascertain from the states mentioned, first, whether they feel themselves threatened, and secondly, and above all, whether this enquiry by Mr. Roosevelt was addressed to us at their suggestion or at any rate with their consent.

The reply was in all cases negative, in some instances strongly so. It is true that I could not cause enquiries to be made of certain of the states and nations mentioned because they themselves—as for example Syria—are at present not in possession of their freedom, but are occupied and consequently deprived of their rights by the military forces of democratic states.

Thirdly: Apart from this fact, all states bordering on Germany have received assurances and above all much more definite proposals than Mr. Roosevelt asked of me in his curious telegram.

. . . . . In conclusion, however, I have the following statement to make:

The German Government are, nevertheless, prepared to give each of the states named an assurance of the kind desired by Roosevelt on the condition of absolute reciprocity, provided that the state concerned wishes it and itself addresses to Germany a request, together with appropriate proposals, for such an assurance. For quite a number of the states included in Roosevelt's list, this question can probably be regarded as settled from the very start, since we are already either allied with them or at least united by close ties of friendship.

As for the duration of these agreements, Germany is willing to make terms with each individual state in accordance with the wishes of that state. . . . . .

No. 344 Official German Communiqué, May 19, 1939

(Translation)

Following the declaration made by the Fuehrer in his Reichstag speech of April 28 concerning Germany's readiness to conclude non-aggression pacts, negotiations have taken place between the German Government and the Governments of Estonia, Latvia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland for the conclusion of such pacts. The negotiations with Estonia and Latvia are about to be completed. Agreement in principle has been reached with Denmark concerning the early conclusion of a mutual non-aggression pact.

The exchange of opinions with Sweden, Norway, and Finland led to the following result:

The Swedish and Norwegian Governments have again declared to the German Government that their respective countries do not feel menaced by Germany, and that, while maintaining the principle of neutrality, integrity and independence, they have no intention of entering into non-aggression pacts with any country. They therefore consider an agreement of the kind unnecessary, and have agreed with the German Government not to pursue the plan any further. The negotiations with the Finnish Government have produced a like result.

No. 345 Treaty of Non-Aggression Between Germany and Denmark, May 31, 1939

(Translation)

The Chancellor of the German Reich
and
His Majesty the King of Denmark and Iceland,

earnestly desirous of maintaining peace between Germany and Denmark under all circumstances, have agreed to confirm this decision by a Treaty and have for this purpose appointed as their plenipotentiaries:

The Chancellor of the German Reich—
the Foreign Minister,
Herr Joachim von Ribbentrop;

His Majesty the King of Denmark and Iceland—
His Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Berlin,
Kammerherr Herluf Zahle;

who, after exchanging their full powers found in good and due form, have agreed on the following provisions:

Article 1

The German Reich and the Kingdom of Denmark will under no circumstances go to war or employ force of any other kind against one another.

Should action of the kind specified in paragraph 1 be taken by a third Power against one of the contracting parties, the other contracting party will in no way support such action.

Article 2

The present Treaty shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification exchanged in Berlin as soon as possible. The Treaty shall come into force with the exchange of the instruments of ratification and shall remain in operation for a period of ten years from that time. Unless notice of termination is given by one of the contracting parties, at least one year before the expiration of this period, its period of validity shall be extended for a further period of ten years. The same shall apply to the subsequent periods.

In faith whereof, the two plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty.

Done in Berlin in two original documents in the German and Danish languages respectively, on May 31, 1939.

Joachim von Ribbentrop **Herluf Zahle**

Protocol of Signature

At the time of the signature this day of the German-Danish Treaty, the agreement reached by both parties on the following point was confirmed:

Support by the contracting party not involved in the conflict within the meaning of Article 1 paragraph 2 of the Treaty shall not be deemed to be given, provided that the attitude of this party is in accordance with the general rules of neutrality. Consequently, if normal exchange and transit of goods are maintained between the contracting party not involved in the conflict and the third power, this shall not be regarded as inadmissible support.

Berlin, May 31, 1939.

Joachim von Ribbentrop **Herluf Zahle**

No. 346 Treaty of Non-Aggression Between Germany and Estonia, June 7, 1939

(Translation)

The Chancellor of the German Reich
and
The President of the Republic of Estonia,

earnestly desirous of maintaining peace between Germany and Estonia under all circumstances, have agreed to confirm this decision by a Treaty and have for this purpose appointed as their plenipotentiaries:

The Chancellor of the German Reich—
the Foreign Minister,
Herr Joachim von Ribbentrop;

The President of the Republic of Estonia—
the Foreign Minister,
Mr. Karl Selter;

who, after exchanging their full powers found in good and due form, have agreed on the following provisions:

Article 1

The German Reich and the Republic of Estonia will under no circumstances go to war or employ force of any other kind against one another.

Should action of the kind specified in paragraph 1 be taken by a third Power against one of the contracting parties, the other contracting party will in no way support such action.

Article 2

The present Treaty shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification exchanged in Berlin as soon as possible.

The present Treaty shall come into force with the exchange of the instruments of ratification and shall remain in operation for a period of ten years from that time. Unless notice of termination is given by one of the contracting parties at least one year before the expiration of this period, its period of validity shall be extended for a further period of ten years. The same shall apply to subsequent periods.

The Treaty shall not however remain in force longer than the corresponding treaty concluded to-day between Germany and Latvia. Should the present Treaty cease for this reason to be operative before the expiration of the period stipulated in paragraph 2, the German Government and the Estonian Government shall, at the request of one of the parties, immediately enter into negotiations for a renewal of the Treaty.

In faith whereof, the two plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty.

Done in Berlin in two original documents in the German and Estonian languages respectively, on June 7, 1939.

Joachim von Ribbentrop Karl Selter

Protocol of Signature

At the time of the signature this day of the German-Estonian Treaty, the agreement reached by both parties on the following point was confirmed:

Support by the contracting party not involved in the conflict within the meaning of Article 1 paragraph 2 of the Treaty shall not be deemed to be given, provided that the attitude of this party is in accordance with the general rules of neutrality. Consequently, if normal exchange and transit of goods are maintained between the contracting party not involved in the conflict and the third Power, this shall not be regarded as inadmissible support.

Berlin, June 7, 1939.

Joachim von Ribbentrop Karl Selter

No. 347 Treaty of Non-Aggression Between Germany and Latvia, June 7, 1939

(Translation)

The Chancellor of the German Reich
and
The President of the Republic of Latvia,

earnestly desirous of maintaining peace between Germany and Latvia under all circumstances, have agreed to confirm this decision by a Treaty and have for this purpose appointed as their plenipotentiaries:

The Chancellor of the German Reich—
the Foreign Minister,
Herr Joachim von Ribbentrop;

The President of the Republic of Latvia—
the Foreign Minister,
Mr. Vilhelms Munters,

who, after exchanging their full powers found in good and due form, have agreed on the following provisions:

Article 1

The German Reich and the Republic of Latvia will under no circumstances go to war or employ force of any other kind against one another.

Should action of the kind specified in paragraph 1 be taken by a third Power against one of the contracting parties, the other contracting party will in no way support such action.

Article 2

The present Treaty shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification exchanged in Berlin as soon as possible.

The Treaty shall come into force with the exchange of the instruments of ratification and shall remain in operation for a period of ten years from that time. Unless notice of termination is given by the contracting parties at least one year before the expiration of this period, its period of validity shall be extended for a further period of ten years. The same shall apply to subsequent periods.

The Treaty shall not however remain in force longer than the corresponding treaty concluded today between Germany and Estonia. Should the present Treaty cease for this reason to be operative before the expiration of the period laid down in paragraph 2, the German Government and the Latvian Government shall, at the request of one of the parties, immediately enter into negotiations for a renewal of the Treaty.

In faith whereof, the two plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty.

Done in Berlin in two original documents in the German and Latvian languages respectively, on June 7, 1939.

Joachim von Ribbentrop V. Munters

Protocol of Signature

At the time of the signature this day of the German-Latvian Treaty, the agreement reached by both parties on the following point was confirmed.

Support by the contracting party not involved in the conflict within the meaning of Article 1 paragraph 2 of the Treaty shall not be deemed to be given, provided that the attitude of this party is in accordance with the general rules of neutrality. Consequently, if normal exchange and transit of goods are maintained between the contracting party not involved in the conflict and the third Power, this shall not be regarded as inadmissible support.

Berlin, June 7, 1939.

Joachim von Ribbentrop V. Munters

No. 348 Treaty of Non-Aggression Between Germany and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, August 23, 1939

Guided by the desire to strengthen the cause of peace between Germany and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, and basing themselves on the fundamental stipulations of the Neutrality Agreement concluded between Germany and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics in April, 1926, the German Government and the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics have come to the following agreement:

Article 1

The two contracting parties undertake to refrain from any act of force, any aggressive act and any attacks against each other undertaken either singly or in conjunction with any other Powers.

Article 2

If one of the contracting parties should become the object of war-like action on the part of a third Power, the other contracting party will in no way support the third Power.

Article 3

The Governments of the two contracting parties will in future remain in consultation with one another in order to inform each other about questions which touch their common interests.

Article 4

Neither of the two contracting parties will join any group of Powers which is directed, mediately or immediately, against the other patry.

Article 5

In case disputes or conflicts on questions of any kind should arise between the two contracting parties, the two partners will solve these disputes or conflicts exclusively by friendly exchange of views or if necessary by arbitration commissions.

Article 6

The present agreement is concluded for the duration of ten years with the stipulation that unless one of the contracting partners denounces it one year before its expiration, it will automatically be prolonged by five years.

Article 7

The present agreement shall be ratified in the shortest possible time. The instruments of ratification are to be exchanged in Berlin. The treaty comes into force immediately it has been signed.

Done in two original documents in the German and Russian languages respectively.

Moscow, August 23, 1939.

For the German Government

Ribbentrop

As plenipotentiary of the Government of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics

Molotow

CHAPTER FOUR

Poland as the Instrument of Britain's Will to War

A. The Effect of Britain's Encirclement Policy on the Polish Attitude

I. Campaign to Exterminate the German Minority

No. 349 The Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, March 27, 1939

According to a report from the German Passport Office at Bromberg, an anti-German demonstration organized by the notorious Polish West Marches Society and attended by about 10,000 persons took place at Bromberg at noon on March 26. The semi-military organizations in Bromberg, including those of the railway and postal officials, played a prominent part in this demonstration. In the course of this demonstration both the German Reich and the German minority in Poland were the subject of violent attacks by means of two speeches. From the participants came shouts such as: "Down with Hitler," "We want Danzig," "We want Königsberg." According to the Passport Office the Polish police had difficulty in protecting German property from the violence of the excited mob.

In addition, it is said that members of the German minority in the Voivodeship of Thorn are exposed to constantly increasing hostility. Particularly the boycott of Germans, systematically prepared by the West Marches Society and other organizations, has assumed during the past few days dimensions hitherto unknown. Though the Polish authorities try to prevent excesses against individuals, the boycott actions as such are obviously tolerated by them.

I request you to make emphatic representations about these most recent boycotts, with special reference to the repeated complaints previously made to the Polish Government concerning the conduct of the West Marches Society.

By Order

Bergmann

No. 350 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Thorn, March 28, 1939

Towards 8 p. m. on March 25, the Comradeship Meeting of the local Chapter of Liniewo, which took place in the house of a German

national by the name of Klatt, was broken up by Polish inhabitants of the said village, the furniture in the meeting-room demolished, a picture of the Fuehrer and the flags and insignia of the Reich destroyed. Police assistance was not available.

Protest lodged with the Voivode. Severe punishment of perpetrators and compensation for damages demanded.

Graf

No. 351 Memorandum of the Director of the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, March 29, 1939

According to my instructions, I requested the Polish Councillor of Embassy to come to see me today, so that I might discuss with him the incidents mentioned in the telegram from our Consulate-General at Thorn, dated the 28th inst.,* and also the call for a boycott of the German minority in Poland issued by a member of Polish societies. Concerning the incidents reported from Thorn, I acquainted Prince Lubomirski with details contained in the report meanwhile received from that town, and informed him that, although our Embassy in Warsaw had already been instructed to lodge a most vigorous protest on that account with the Polish Government,** we for our part did not want to leave the Embassy here uninformed with regard to the indignation which these incidents have aroused in official circles in Berlin. The German Government must, I said, insist upon an immediate investigation, and severe punishment of the aggressors.

It was also incredible, I said, that Polish newspapers were permitted to publish the above-mentioned call for a boycott. Referring to the conversation between the German Foreign Minister and the Polish Ambassador on the 27th inst.,*** I pointed out most emphatically to Prince Lubomirski what serious consequences such incidents must have for German-Polish relations. The Polish Councillor of Embassy, who seemed to be unaware of the incidents mentioned, repeatedly assured me that the "mob policy" would certainly not be tolerated by his Government, and promised to report the matter at once to Warsaw. He tried to excuse the attitude of the Poles by mentioning the agitation generally prevailing throughout Poland; he himself, however, seemed to realize that a remedy must be found.

Fürst von Bismarck

* Cf. No. 350.
** Cf. No. 349.
*** Cf. No. 209.

No. 352 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, March 30, 1939

Following the interview on the 28th inst.* with Foreign Minister Beck in which I brought up the subject of the serious incidents which had taken place in Pommerellen, especially those at Liniewo and Bromberg, I today made emphatic representations in connection with the same matters to Vice-Minister Count Szembek. I made a vigorous protest, particularly with regard to the destruction of a picture of the Fuehrer and the destruction of German insignia and national emblems, and demanded an investigation and the punishment of the guilty parties. Count Szembek, who so far had received only a much toned-down account of the incidents, promised an immediate re-investigation.

Moltke

No. 353 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Thorn, March 30, 1939

On March 29 at 9 p. m., about 40 Poles at Jablonowo attacked the public-house belonging to a German national named Schnackenberg. Three guests, who were minority Germans, were attacked as they left the premises, one being seriously injured. Forced entrance into the public-house was prevented. Garden-fence torn down, battens used as weapons. House violently bombarded with stones. The police, although informed in good time of threatened attack, did not appear and have so far taken no action.

Vigorous protest demanding immediate investigation lodged with Vice-Voivode today.

Graf

No. 354 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, March 30, 1939

The recent aggravation of the anti-German feeling in Pommerellen finds expression in a growing boycott movement, a continued campaign

* Cf. No. 211.

of hate and numerous acts of violence. The economic boycott is making itself felt especially in the towns of Graudenz and Bromberg, and according to statements made by members of the German minority, has already caused considerable damage to the business of German tradespeople. In Bromberg various Polish military associations have issued an appeal calling for the complete economic and cultural boycott of the German minority, and the elimination of the German influence on film and press.

In the course of recent demonstrations, in which police officials frequently took part, the crowd repeatedly shouted demands, such as, "Kick the Germans out," and "Danzig and Flatow must become Polish." In many places the window-panes of German houses were smashed, an act in which officials, such as parish magistrates, also took part. In reply to protests made by a German, one of these magistrates said that he could not help it, and that he had not been the instigator of such demonstrations on his own account, but that orders to that effect had been received, and that the men high up, while pretending to be negotiating in Berlin and Warsaw, had secretly given orders to make it a clean-up.

For the Consul-General

Graf

No. 355 The German Consul-General in Posen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, March 31, 1939

For months the Polish press has been at work in the western districts poisoning public opinion against the Germans. At one time it demands stringent measures against the German minority in Poland, at another a boycott of German goods and German shops, or it launches general attacks against the German minority and the policy of the Reich. This anti-German agitation which has been steadily growing, especially since the September crisis of last year, has now, obviously in connection with the development of the political situation in Europe, led to an explosion. The press gives unrestrained expression to its anti-German feeling, and hardly a day passes on which the Posen newspapers do not publish more or less aggressive articles or insulting remarks about the German minority. Although the excesses in Posen lasted only about a week, it cannot be said that the anti-German agitation has abated. In the city of Posen things have, to all appearances, quieted down. At least, acts of violence have for the most part ceased. The day before yesterday a few window panes were smashed in a German bank building, in German book-shops, and in the house of a Protestant minister. The Consulate-General is still un-

der increased police protection. However, in other towns and in country districts excesses have continued; German shop-keepers' windows are smashed, German shop-signs painted over, walls of houses besmirched, and German meetings disturbed. In some cases boycott-pickets have been posted. The hostile feeling has penetrated even to the remotest villages.

Walther

No. 356 The Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, April 2, 1939

The numerous anti-minority outrages committed during the Polish municipal elections, and enumerated in the last reports from the Consulate-General at Thorn, are further proof that the agitation against the German minority is a planned affair. Moreover, these reports show that this agitation does not originate only with irresponsible persons, but is tolerated to a great extent by Polish police officials, and even actively supported by certain local authorities.

May I ask you to request the Polish Government in emphatic terms, on the strength of the German-Polish Minorities Declaration,* immediately to take effective measures for the prevention of further excesses against the German minority in Poland. In this connection, please point out that excesses of this kind are apt to do serious harm to German-Polish relations in general.

By Order

Schliep

No. 357 The German Consul-General in Posen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, April 4, 1939

During the past ten days many members of the German minority have been maltreated, and on March 24 members of a trombone band at Zerniki, in the district of Wongrowitz, were fired at by a group of young fellows. The shots fortunately missed their target. Moreover, on March 27 a certain Herr Hoffmann and a Frau Schmalenberger, of Zab-

* Cf. No. 101.

czyn, were beaten by a group of rowdies, and two minority Germans, Messrs. Thomas and Thiede, were pelted with stones and seriously injured. Lastly, on March 24, in the district of Wongrowitz, members of the Young Men's and Young Women's Protestant Association were attacked and maltreated by a gang of ruffians.

On March 28 a minority German of Wollstein, by the name of Zasche, was beaten and maltreated by a number of Poles who had been called up for military service and whom he had driven to Wollstein in his car.

Furthermore, numerous Germans in this Voivodeship have had their windows smashed, for example at Margonin, Waldthal near Samotschin, and Lipiagora, all in the district of Kolmar; Schokken and Gollantsch, in the district of Wongrowitz; also at Klecko, in the district of Gnesen, where the shutters of shops were besmirched with tar. The boycott action against German firms continues. In the district of Wollstein, for instance, pickets posted by the West Marches Society prevented Poles from making purchases in German shops and in the district of Wongrowitz the *Zwiazek Polski dla handlu i przemyslu* (Polish Association for Trade and Commerce) took a prominent part in the boycott agitation.

Walther

No. 358 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, April 4, 1939

In the course of the past few days a public appeal has been issued calling expressly for the boycott of German trade and handicraft. The appeal is signed by ten different semi-military associations, and contains the following demands:

1. All Poles buying goods in German shops, or frequenting German public houses, shall have their names posted.
2. No goods of German origin may be used in Polish households.
3. Housewives must not buy German farm produce offered for sale at the public market.
4. Poles must not subscribe to German newspapers and periodicals.
5. All Polish firms shall employ only Polish juvenile and adult workers.
6. State and municipal officials and workers, as also employees and workmen in private firms must, in their relations with persons of German nationality, use the Polish language exclusively.

7. All signs and advertisements in the German language must be removed.

8. Poles must not deal with German banks.

9. Our aims are:
   (a) To obtain a repeal of the law permitting Germans to acquire real estate and to hold licenses.
   (b) To prevent all German firms from furnishing supplies of any sort to State, municipal, or other administrative bodies.
   (c) To restrict the postal privileges granted to the German press and German publishing firms in Poland.
   (d) To secure the prohibition of German films in Poland.

10. We demand the surrender of all superfluous German church buildings.

11. We demand the abolition of the excessively many German schools in Poland, whether State or private schools.

The expert at the Embassy who is dealing with these matters has pointed out to the representative of the Foreign Ministry on the Polish Government Committee* that the appeal in question clearly confirms the correctness of the German view regarding the deleterious effects which the wide-spread anti-German propaganda must have on German-Polish economic relations.

Apart from this, I also am going to make representations at the Foreign Ministry with regard to the political aspect of the matter.

von Moltke

No. 359 The German Consul-General in Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, April 13, 1939

In numerous communities in Pommerellen, near the Danzig frontier, anti-German outrages have greatly increased of late. The excitement among the German minority is steadily growing, with the result that around Easter a large number of minority Germans from Pommerellen (according to some reports, approximately one hundred persons) fled across the frontier to Danzig.

* The committee in question is the Polish Governmental Committee for execution of the German-Polish Commercial Treaty.

In addition I hear from a reliable source that during the first few days of April Polish gangs drove about in motor cars to various places in the former district of Berent, assaulting members of the German population, forcing their way into German farms and demolishing furniture. As a result, the German population have been intimidated to such an extent that they bury their valuables, do not venture into the streets or fields in the day-time, and spend the nights in hiding-places outside their farms for fear of attack. The local Polish population claim to be in possession of arms.

von Janson

No. 360 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, April 18, 1939

Regarding the serious outrages committed against members of the German minority on the occasion of Polish municipal elections, I have, according to instructions,* made emphatic protestations to M. Kunicki, acting Director of Department West in the Foreign Ministry, pointing out that these incidents had considerably curtailed the franchise to which the German minority was entitled under the Constitution. In this connection I adduced a number of specially serious cases from the extensive material at our disposal, emphasizing in particular the fact that Polish police and municipal officials also took part in these incidents.

Finally I expressed the hope that the Polish Government would investigate these incidents which were obviously contradictory to the German-Polish Minorities Declaration. M. Kunicki held out prospects of such investigation and promised me a reply.

Krümmer

No. 361 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, April 18, 1939

Since my report dated April 8 enumerating all incidents connected with attacks on minority Germans and damage done to German property,

* Cf. No. 356.

etc., recently reported to the Consulate-General, the situation has not materially changed, although a slight easing of the tension is perhaps noticeable. We must not be misled, however, by the relaxation of tension, since the attitude of the Poles towards Germans remains hostile in the extreme, and is kept so by continual assemblies. The result is that in various communities in my district name-plates and signs are continually being besmirched and windows smashed. The dismissal of German workers continues owing to the pressure exerted by the Polish employees upon the management. Maltreatment of minority Germans likewise continues.

It is almost impossible to enumerate all the individual cases which have been brought to the notice of the Consulate-General. The boycott agitation has not yet abated.

As already frequently reported, the anti-German provocations are instigated by the West Marches Society which misses no opportunity of attacking Germans. This West Marches Society is again organizing a propaganda week to be held from April 15-22, 1939, during which time propaganda directed against Germany will be carried on in every town and village in Pommerellen from public platforms, over the radio, and by means of processions accompanied by loud speakers.

von Küchler

No. 362 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, April 22, 1939,

Systematic efforts to debase the German minority in the eyes of the population have recently become increasingly pronounced. In addition to propaganda noticeable in my district, obviously emanating from military quarters with the object of disparaging the strength and striking power of the German Army, the spread of reports regarding an alleged shortage of foodstuffs in Germany is worthy of note. This propaganda is accompanied by a colossal campaign of hate against everything German here. According to messages received, resolutions aiming at the destruction of the German minority in Upper Silesia are being carried at meetings of political associations. The result is the recent increase in vile outrages against individual Germans, in which Polish youth in particular plays a conspicuous part.

Nöldeke

No. 363 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Kattowitz, April 24, 1939

The attack upon the *Volksbund*-Home in Chorzow has proved to be one of the most serious outrages which has happened during the past few weeks. On the evening of April 21 a fairly large group of men, armed with battens, cudgels, and the like, forced their way into the building in which the members of the German Youth Association were holding their customary choral practice. Some of the Germans were subjected to serious maltreatment and insults, a mob from the street later taking part in the general fracas. The police protection was manifestly insufficient. During the subsequent hearings at the police station even police officials indulged in insults to the German Reich and the Fuehrer.

I have, furthermore, the honor to report on numerous other excesses which I have investigated:—

On April 18 a minority German, Joachim Pilarek of Bismarckshütte, was assaulted and maltreated at the entrance to his house by a gang of terrorists.

On the following day Peter Kordys and Richard Mateja, of Kattowitz, who were accompanied by their wives, were attacked and seriously maltreated near the *Ferrumkolonie* by a gang of forty men, mainly Insurgents. Frau Kordys presumes that her husband escaped across the frontier. Mateja, who was left lying on the ground badly injured, was sent to Kattowitz Court-prison on April 24. According to information obtained, his injuries are said to be so serious that the police hesitate to release him.

Further, Herr Czauderna, a teacher at the German school at Ligota, was attacked and maltreated on his way home with his fiancée. Medical examination showed that he suffered injuries to his liver and kidneys.

On April 19, Herbert Lippok, of Lipiny, a minority German, was attacked on the road from Hubertushütte to Chropaczow by five civilians who completely smashed his bicycle.

On April 20, three German girls on their way back from a choral practice by the St. Cecelia Choir were insulted for having spoken German in the Krakauerstrasse. While two of the girls managed to escape at once, the third was struck several times.

On the same day, in the Wojciechowskiego at Zalenze, Günther Stöckel, a minority German, was attacked by members of the *Mloda Polska.** He escaped after offering brief resistance.

On the same day, a gang of about forty men tore down and destroyed the name-plate on the house of the German *Kulturbund*, situated in the Theaterstrasse in Kattowitz. The same thing happened at the offices of the *Kulturbund* in the Bahnhofstrasse. On the following day, the win-

* The Youth Association of the Polish Government Party, "Camp of National Union."

dows of the Eichendorff Secondary School at Königshütte were again smashed by unknown persons.

Concerning the German minority it has been said more or less explicitly at numerous meetings of the Insurgents'* and West Marches Societies that the German element had either to be ousted or wholly exterminated. In consequence of this propaganda the position of the German minority has become difficult and dangerous, particularly in country districts and villages. The events of the past few days have at least proved that the authorities are not in a position to afford the German population sufficient protection against acts of terror committed by individual chauvinists who have been incited to violence.

Nöldeke

No. 364 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, April 28, 1939

I have the honor to transmit herewith the translation of an appeal, addressed to the members of the Federation of Former Volunteers of the Polish Army, and posted in the village of Wielopole, near Rybnik.

Detachment Commander Woznica, I hear, is a revenue officer at Rybnik, whereas M. Szweda is a male nurse employed at Wielopole Hospital and Infirmary, and is notorious for having committed various outrages against Germans.

Nöldeke

Appendix

(Translation)

Order No. 3/39 issued to the members of the local Federation of Former Volunteers of the Polish Army.

1. Listening-in to German radio stations is prohibited as from today.
2. Every member of the Detachment must at once report to the Chairman the names of persons of pro-German sympathies, persons who make a practice of listening-in to German radio stations, persons belonging to German organizations, persons speaking German, places where such persons are employed, persons expressing themselves in favor of Germany, and persons spreading false reports.
3. The above orders must be strictly obeyed.

"Heil"

Woznica	Szweda
Detachment Commander	Chairman of the Detachment

* Cf. No. 86, footnote.

No. 365 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, May 6, 1939

I have the honor of submitting herewith a copy,* placed at my disposal, of the copious material collected by the *Deutscher Volksbund*, citing instances of outrages perpetrated against minority Germans during the past few weeks. The file, arranged according to the individual district organizations of the *Deutscher Volksbund*, comprises particulars on outrages committed against the property or persons of minority Germans, detention of such persons, etc. The collection further comprises anti-German appeals which have appeared in the Polish press, Polish press reports on anti-German demonstrations, a survey of newspaper confiscations, and measures taken against the private schools of the *Deutscher Schulverein* in the Voivodeship of Silesia, as well as against individual teachers and pupils.

It is impossible for the Consulate-General to undertake an investigation of individual cases which have already been carefully examined by the *Deutscher Volksbund*, in view of the large number of such cases and the grave danger to which further examinations would expose the minority Germans concerned.

On the whole, the general situation has not materially changed. The number of cases of maltreatment has perhaps declined somewhat during the past few days, but on the other hand, there has been a considerable increase in cases of serious threats as well as of excesses against property. In nearly all parts of my official district windows of dwellings and business premises belonging to minority Germans have been smashed on various occasions and Germans have been grossly insulted in the public streets, even in the main business centres of towns and cities.

An abatement of the outrages is not to be expected until the authorities put a stop to the campaign of hate in the press and at the meetings of the associations. As long as the Polish press and the associations continue to incite individuals to resort to force on their own initiative against so-called provocation on the part of Germans, further serious incidents are to be reckoned with in the future. Generally speaking, the prevailing impression is that the German population is seriously intimidated, particularly in the country districts.

Nöldeke

* The file referred to consists of more than 200 cases.

No. 366 The German Consul at Lodz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Lodz, May 8, 1939

The terror spread by the hate-inspired Polish population among the Germans in the Voivodeship of Lodz, in the form of numerous cases of assault and battery, often resulting in bodily injury, threats, insults, boycotts, damage to property, arrests, and chicanery of every conceivable kind, and last but not least, arson, continues unabated. The Polish population has the unmistakable intention of destroying the German minority unless this minority allows itself to be completely Polonized.

In the schools the teachers quite unconscionably incite the Polish children against the German children, or refrain from any steps to protect the latter. In nearly every town and village German children are attacked on their way to school, abused, and not infrequently beaten by other children or pelted with stones. Even five-year-old children sing anti-German songs which frequently contain curses against the Fuehrer. In many places the parents must therefore accompany their children to school in order to protect them from attack.

In rural districts houses of German farmers have been set on fire. During the night of April 26, farm-houses belonging to two Germans, Rudolf Albrecht and Julius Hein, of Rokitnica in the district of Lask, were simultaneously burned down. There can be no doubt that this was a case of arson. While the fire was raging Polish neighbors declared, "Let the Hitlerites burn! One ought to pitch them into the fire!" Apart from the live stock nothing could be saved.

The word has been passed on to Poles everywhere not to buy either real estate or cattle from Germans, as the latter would shortly have to flee the country in any case and would be forced to leave their goods and chattels behind.

The German minority here are considerably alarmed and reckon with further and worse excesses if chauvinistic Polish organizations and the press continue, with the Government's approval, to incite the ignorant mob.

von Berchem

No. 367 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, May 8, 1939

For about a week several shop windows in the main thoroughfares have been displaying a map on which certain areas of the German Reich are marked by little flags. The areas thus marked comprise the whole of East Prussia and the cities of Beuthen, Oppeln, Gleiwitz, Breslau, Stettin and Kolberg.

Alongside the map a placard is exhibited bearing the following sentences in Polish: "We are not looking for war! But, if war is forced on us, we shall take back the ancient Polish territory inhabited by Poles."

This map attracts great attention. Large crowds may be constantly observed gathering in front of it, discussing the new prospects thus opened up for Poland.

von Moltke

No. 368 The Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in London

Order

(Translation)

Berlin, May 11, 1939

In consequence of an intensified campaign of hate, systematically carried on by the anti-German organizations despite continued and serious representations on the part of the German Government, persecution of all classes belonging to the German minority in Poland, especially in the former Prussian provinces, has been on the increase for some considerable time. From the attitude of Polish Government departments it must be inferred that they are neither seriously inclined nor apparently in a position to put a stop to this development. Since the German minority press in Poland is prevented by rigorous censorship from reporting fully on these anti-German excesses, the reports by the German consular agents in Poland are, apart from reports by the *Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro*, the only reliable source of information shedding a light on the actual position of the German minority. I enclose herewith copies of a number of such reports on anti-German measures and incidents, and further reports will, in future, be regularly submitted for your information, with the request that you make the best possible use of this material in your contacts with the British Government.*

By Order

Woermann

* The German Embassy in London made use of the reports accordingly.

No. 369 Petition by the Representatives of the German Minority to the President of the Polish Republic

(Translation)

May 12, 1939

In the name of the German minority in Poland we appeal to you, Mr. President, in whom is vested the united and indivisible supreme power of state, to secure for the German minority respect for, and enforcement of, those rights guaranteed to it by the Constitution and the Law. We feel it incumbent upon us to take this step because the almost innumerable representations made to the Government by word of mouth and in writing, although backed by conclusive evidence, have proved unavailing, and because we are mindful of the words which you, Mr. President, addressed to the undersigned* on November 5, 1937, on the occasion of the agreement reached between the Polish and the German Governments concerning the treatment of the respective minorities. You emphasized at the time that mutual respect for the customs, habits and traditions of these two minorities was the most important prerequisite for harmonious co-existence of Poles and Germans.

The position of the German minority has always been difficult. The tension resulting from world-political events has, for weeks past, found vent in undisguised and impassioned hatred and numerous acts of violence committed against the German minority and its individual members. We have received from the Government the verbal assurance that they disapproved of anti-German excesses and that they had issued instructions for the prevention of agitations and outrages. The German minority has not been given effective protection, so that it is now threatened with extinction. The number of unemployed Germans is alarmingly high and unemployment is steadily increasing especially in the industrial districts. The competent authorities responsible for the application of the Labor Laws deny protection to Germans who are practically precluded from obtaining employment.

Agrarian Reform affects the German landowners to a disproportionately greater degree than the Polish, whereas the allotment of land to Germans for settlement is an extremely rare occurrence. Even in case of direct inheritance, a German is not automatically entitled to possession of landed property.

The cultivation of spiritual, cultural, economic and personal relations, and intercourse with our mother-country are hindered. Adherence to the National Socialist ideology is regarded as inimical to the interests of the Polish State. Anti-German elements frequently hinder, and in some cases, even prevent the use of our mother-tongue in the religious observances of minority-German Catholics, and the police afford these worshippers no protection. In the Protestant churches, especially The United

* Cf. No. 103.

Protestant Church in Upper Silesia and The Protestant Augsburgian Church, the Germans, although constituting the overwhelming majority of Protestant congregations, have been deprived of their privileges.

In German public schools Polish teachers are employed to such an extent that these schools have lost their German character. There is no German institution providing a training for young teachers. German private schools have to contend with difficulties of all kinds. The closing of German private schools, especially in Volhynia, means for the German minority the loss of their most important educational institutions. The Silesian Sejm has issued special regulations in addition to the existing State Laws, in order to prevent the granting of permits for the establishment of new German private schools. Linguistic examinations, for which there is no legal justification, are held in the Voivodeship of Silesia. German parents who refuse to send their children to Polish schools are heavily fined or imprisoned. Despite many years of endeavor to obtain a ruling, the question of textbooks in German private schools is still undecided. Teachers are frequently refused permission to give instruction. School supervision is exclusively in the hands of the Poles. The school supervisory authorities neither understand nor take into account the specific character of the German schools.

The organization of our German youth in an independent association for the pursuit of cultural and educational activities has so far failed, owing to opposition by the authorities concerned. German children are left entirely to their own devices at the very age at which they are most susceptible to educational influences.

A summary of all these points has been before the Government for years in the form of memoranda and petitions. They are informed in full detail on all matters concerning the German minority. Ever since the promulgation of the Constitution on March 17, 1921, the representatives of the German minority have endeavored to prevail upon the Government and the legislative bodies to pass supplementary laws for the enforcement of Article 109.* The ideal conception expressed in Article 109 has remained purely declaratory. The present conditions are due to the absence of clear legal provisions applicable to the minority. The German minority is firmly convinced that the treatment meted out to them is contrary to the Constitution, and in many cases to the intentions of the legislator.

In view of the responsibility which we owe to the Republic of Poland as well as to our minority we deem ourselves entitled and obliged to bring these matters to your personal notice, Mr. President, and to appeal

* Article 109 of the Polish Constitution reads as follows: Every citizen has the right to retain his nationality and to cultivate his mother-tongue and national characteristics.
Special State Laws guarantee to the minorities within the Polish State free and unrestricted development of their national characteristics by means of autonomous minority associations of a public judicial character as granted to associations within the sphere of general self-administration.
As regards the activities of such associations, the State reserves the right to control or supplement their financial resources in case of necessity.

to you to secure for the German minority the rights to which they are entitled under the Constitution and to guarantee the impartial enforcement of the Law as laid down in the statutes.

We are, &c. . . . . .

In the Name of the German Minority

Senator Erwin Hasbach Dipl.-Ing. Rudolf Wiesner

No. 370 The German Consul at Lodz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Lodz, May 15, 1939

Very grave excesses which may be designated as a German pogrom, occurred last Saturday, May 13 and Sunday, May 14 in the town of Tomaschow-Mazowiecki (of some 42,000 inhabitants, of which some 3,000 are Germans), as a result of which numerous Germans have suffered complete financial ruin. A German by the name of Schmiegel had his skull split and a woman, whose name has so far not been ascertained, was killed in a field while attempting to escape. Schmiegel's son was thrown from a second story window and sustained serious injuries.

The excesses began last Saturday, May 13. A few days previously the "Association of Polish Vocational Societies," an organization closely connected with the Government Party, exhibited large posters announcing an "Anti-German Demonstration" to take place on Saturday, May 13, This demonstration started with speeches made from the balcony of a building in which the offices of the above-mentioned association, of the Government Party O. Z. N. and its youth organization, "Mloda Polska" (Young Poland) are housed. In speeches addressed to huge crowds Germany was attacked in a most reprehensible manner, and the assertion was made that Poles in Germany were subjected to gross maltreatment, that their hands and feet were mutilated, their schools and churches demolished, and so on. When the mob was sufficiently worked up, the leaders of the demonstration handed forms to various doubtful characters who, accompanied by the crowds, were to go and demand that factory managers should immediately dismiss all Germans, and should sign the forms containing a declaration to that effect. This they did. Under pressure from the mob the firms were compelled to comply, whereupon the German workers were driven out of the factories. The crowd, having accomplished this, commenced the systematic and complete demolition of all German shops and private dwellings. In a wild fury they destroyed nearly all German private property. The Germans, who were hunted

like beasts, fled to the open country and did not return until day-break. Many were seriously injured, having been stabbed or beaten with sticks.

Sunday was peaceful, until in the evening the excesses began anew. The crowd destroyed all German private property which had been left intact on the previous day. It must be particularly emphasized that the police joined in the demonstrators' procession and did nothing to protect the life and property of the Germans. Without exaggeration, it may be said that these excesses were tolerated, if not instigated, by the Government. Now, after these acts of terror have already been committed, police squads with fixed bayonets patrol the streets of the town for the sake of appearances.

On Saturday evening the windows of Ruppert's book shop in the Petrikauerstrasse, Lodz, where German books and periodicals are for sale, were smashed, as were also the windows of the (entirely non-political) Vocational Association of German Employees. On Sunday, i.e., yesterday, excesses also occurred at the "Stylowy" Cinema, where the German film, "Land der Liebe," was showing. Terrorists forced the public to quit the theatre, and belabored the dispersing crowds in front of the theatre with laths studded with nails.

As there is at present no reason to suppose that these acts of terror will be stopped, the position of the Germans here may be considered very serious. They are deciding in ever increasing numbers to leave the country and to sell their real estate, as they consider their livelihood in Poland endangered. They fear the Poles, who, when no longer restrained, are capable of any act of violence. The German population regards them as much worse than the worst terrorists of the old Russian days.

von Berchem

No. 371 The German Consul at Lodz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)
Lodz, May 18, 1939

A large number of Germans from Tomaschow have given the Consulate an account of the excesses that occurred on the 13th and 14th inst., and of the damage inflicted upon them, asking the Consulate to make it possible for them to emigrate to Germany. The total number of those affected amounts to over a thousand, as all Germans, with very few exceptions, have fallen victims to the pogroms. From the villages in the neighborhood of Tomaschow, where German peasants live, great material damage is likewise reported.

There are about ten seriously injured Germans in the hospital at Tomaschow.

von Berchem

No. 372 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, May 19, 1939

I have the honor to submit a new collection* of more than a hundred cases of violence against members of the German minority. The incidents are mainly cases of arrest, punishment, searching of houses and premises, threats, illegal detention, assault, confiscation of German newspapers, anti-German agitation, besides further large-scale dismissals of members of the German minority employed in industry.

Nöldeke

No. 373 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, May 22, 1939

By order of the educational authorities, the private elementary schools at Gnesen, Birnbaum, and Wollstein have been closed.

The schools in question are:

Elementary School at Gnesen-Gniezno, with 209 pupils and seven grades.

Elementary School at Wollstein-Wolsztyn, with 102 pupils and four grades.

Elementary School at Birnbaum-Miedzychód, with 102 pupils and four grades.

Walther

No. 374 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, May 22, 1939

The tension of the last few weeks has had its repercussions on the German minority in Volhynia. It is true that the Germans in Volhynia

* Cf. No. 365.

are in a more favorable position than those in the western regions in so far as they have not to suffer from the usual boycotts and outrages at the hands of Polish-born elements, who form only a small minority in Volhynia. The Ukrainians, moreover, who remain implacable enemies of the Polish State, continue to be regarded by the Poles as their main adversaries in that part of the country, a fact that finds expression in innumerable arrests and cases of oppression of the Ukrainian population. The attitude of the authorities towards the Volhynia Germans, however, is growing more and more rigorous.

The anti-German standpoint of the school authorities is becoming increasingly manifest. At present German schools are being closed in such numbers that the complete annihilation of the German school system is imminent. In the last few days no less than five German schools have been closed, namely, at Rózysce, Bryszcze, Harazdze, Adamow and Ludwików. By these measures a further four hundred children of the German minority are left without German instruction. Moreover, the certificate of loyalty was refused to a number of teachers, who can therefore no longer follow their profession.

The seriousness of the position in which the Volhynia Germans find themselves is indicated by the fact that during the last few months illegal emigration to the Reich has considerably and steadily increased despite the long way to the frontier.

In this connection the news recently received by the Embassy from a reliable source concerning the parish of Kostopol in Eastern Volhynia is of interest. From Kostopol alone 250 families have recently emigrated after selling their possessions for a song. A large part of them, however, failed to reach the Reich; they were forcibly sent back from the frontier by the Polish authorities, and are now faced with abject poverty. Several young people in their attempt to cross the frontier were shot dead by Polish frontier guards. According to our source of information five such cases are known to have occurred in Kostopol.

von Moltke

No. 375 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, May 25, 1939

On the 12th inst. Senator Hasbach lodged a complaint with the Ministry of Education in Warsaw because German students in Posen had been prevented from attending lectures; the Vice-Minister has merely promised to get in touch with Posen University. Altogether forty German-born students in Posen are affected, and will thus lose at least one year of their course of studies.

Walther

No. 376 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, May 30, 1939

The situation has unfortunately not improved during the last two weeks. A further list* of 48 incidents is submitted herewith. I must add that the German minority is, of course, very much intimidated by the continuous outrages, so that today hardly any member of the German community ventures to speak German in the streets. All the same, attacks upon these Germans continue to occur in the open street, and violent outrages frequently take place. In most cases the perpetrators are members of the so-called Association of Young Insurgents.

Nöldeke

No. 377 The German Consul at Teschen to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Teschen, June 2, 1939

German Home at Karwin transferred by order of the Voivodeship to Polish compulsory administration on May 30. Managing bodies of co-operative societies compulsorily Polonized.

One hundred and eight shareholders of German nationality holding 256 shares; 114 shareholders, members of the German minority, holding 179 shares.

New building of Home completed two years ago. Main building, gymnasium, stage, large restaurants and public rooms, playing field. Total value 160,000 zloty; Home was regarded as center for large section of entire German minority in Olsa territory.

Damerau

No. 378 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, June 6, 1939

At the opening meeting of the Economic Council of Pommerellen which took place at Thorn on the 3rd inst., M. Kwiatkowski, the Polish

* Cf. Nos. 365 and 372.

Vice-Premier, delivered a speech which was reported with great prominence and leading head-lines by the whole press on the 4th inst. The semi-official *Gazeta Polska* published it under the head-line, "Quiet persevering work and a ready sword! Pommerellen is, and ever will remain, Poland's connection with the world."

This is not the first time that a member of the Polish Government takes part in the propaganda directed against Germany and tries to increase a war spirit against Germany. At any rate it seems noteworthy that a similar tone is struck by the Deputy-Chief of the Government.

In another speech delivered a day later, on the 4th inst., on the occasion of the unveiling of the Pilsudski Memorial Tablet at Ciechocinek by M. Koscialkowski, the Social Welfare Minister, the theory was brought forward that the possession of Pommerellen was an indispensable condition for Poland's economic and political prosperity. M. Koscialkowski went even farther, saying that "in the event of a struggle being forced upon Poland" the aim of a victorious fight would be "to regain those ancient Polish regions which ought to have come to Poland long ago."

von Moltke

No. 379 The German Consul at Teschen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Teschen, June 6, 1939

Following upon the confiscation of the Students' Home at Oderberg as announced by the press and wireless, and the compulsory transfer to the Poles of the German Home at Karwin,* as reported in my telegram, the *Deutsche Volksbank* at Teschen was subjected to compulsory Polish administration on March 6, 1939.

The building of the *Volksbank* is in excellent condition, and is valued at about 400,000 zloty. The *Volksbank* was the last remaining German bank in the whole of my district.

The confiscated Students' Home at Oderberg was likewise the only one of its kind. It had modern accommodations for sixty pupils. The building was erected about seven years ago, and is valued at about 160,000 zloty.

Representations made by the Consulate, particularly with regard to the German Home at Karwin, have so far not been answered by the Voivodeship.

von der Damerau

* Cf. No. 377.

No. 380 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, June 6, 1939

The measures taken by the Polish authorities against Germanism and German prosperity continue. A few days ago the old-established drug-store at Thorn known as the *Adler-Apotheke,* property for two generations of the German family of Heininger, was forcibly closed, and so almost simultaneously was the specially licensed *Hampelsche Apotheke* at Culm. The one remaining German drug-store, at Graudenz, the *Kronen-Apotheke,* has also been ordered to close its doors.

It is obvious that these are systematic measures to suppress German drug-stores.

Two fully-licensed innkeepers have also had their licenses for the sale of spirits and tobacco withdrawn recently.

In addition to these anti-German measures, congresses, meetings, and other conferences of patriotic associations are taking place, as previously reported, which are either straight anti-German demonstrations, or at least occasions at which the speakers without exception adopt a definitely hostile attitude toward Germany.

M. Vladislav Raczkiewicz, Voivode of Pommerellen, is actively engaged in anti-German propaganda. On one occasion when distributing decorations, he declared in emphatic tones: "We must plough over the fallow land which the robbers have left behind." Even though the general public was not present at the ceremony, the fact that his speech was made public suffices to show that the masses can hardly be restrained from outrages when the head official of the province agitates against Germany in this way (for only Germany can have been meant).

Small wonder that the situation of the German minority here is desperate in consequence of these conditions and of the outrages, assaults, and acts of violence reported elsewhere. This desperation shows itself most clearly in the stream of emigrants, especially of illegal emigrants, which continues unabated.

It can well be understood that German landowners are in a state of utter despair owing to the continuous oppression, attacks, and violence suffered at the hands of the neighboring Poles. Often they cannot go to bed at night for fear of having not merely windows smashed, but farms set on fire. In this state of despair they forget everything and harbor only one wish: "Away from this hell and back to the Reich."

von Küchler

No. 381 The German Consul at Lodz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Lodz, June 7, 1939

It is true that since the incidents at Tomaschow* and at Konstantynow** mass assaults and outrages by the mob have not recurred, as such sensational events seem undesirable to the Polish authorities for propagandist reasons. Nevertheless the suppression of the German minority continues in every part of my district and is tolerated and even supported by the authorities. Every day incidents are reported to the Consulate which show quite conclusively what efforts are being made to ruin and break the spirit of Germanism by means of threats, intimidation, dismissals ordered by the authorities, and chicanery of all kinds.

The threat of death and torture, etc., has become an everyday experience for members of the German minority in every part of the Voivodeship. Thefts of wood, felling of fruit trees, poisoning of dogs, and other outrages on German property are regarded as the order of the day in all rural districts, without any serious attempt on the part of the police to discover or punish the perpetrators when complaints are received from the injured parties.

The continuous threats of murder are causing acute nervousness among members of the German minority both in remote farms and some villages in which Germans live in fairly large numbers. Whole families are known to be spending the nights in the woods and fields for fear of attacks on their houses by Polish gangs. In various villages the German families come together by night, and while the women and children sleep, the men keep watch armed with cudgels and hay forks. During the last few weeks this feeling of perpetual insecurity has increased the tendency shown by whole villages to emigrate. Farmers are ready to sell all their property at ridiculously low prices, thus very likely only encouraging the Poles to continue their reign of terror, as the Polish inhabitants hope to acquire their ground at a cheap price or gratis when the Germans emigrate. In many cases the menaced farmers have simply deserted their property and secretly crept across the frontier. Recently however the Polish frontier guards have been reinforced so that the danger of arrest and severe punishment for "illegal emigration" has become very great. It seems that hundreds of members of the German minority have already been imprisoned for attempting to cross the frontier illegally.

The industrial German population are suffering increasingly from unemployment due in the first instance to the fact that they are being

* Cf. No. 370.

** Between May 17 and 21, 1939, severe anti-German outrages took place at Konstantynow similar to those at Tomaschow, in the course of which Germans were maltreated and property damaged.

systematically ousted by Poles. Manufacturers, intimidated by hints from the authorities, by pressure from their suppliers and customers, and by threats coming from Polish workers and from the mob, are compelled to dismiss German workers without notice. Even manufacturers belonging to the German minority have been unable to resist such demands made by the Poles, who are constantly stirred up against them. Resolutions are still being passed by Polish associations of all kinds calling upon the authorities to dismiss all Germans in their employment, and demanding the boycott of German firms.

The boycott carried out by the Poles particularly hits the smaller German shopkeepers and traders. The Consulate is informed of cases in which the monthly turnover of small business men has been reduced to one-fifth or one-tenth of its normal level. These Germans have no alternative but to hasten their emigration, since to continue their business would mean daily loss of capital.

Thus Polish chauvinism continues to fight against the German minority in every possible way and in every walk of life. If this campaign is not soon brought to a stop, the complete annihilation of the German minority in the district of Lodz will be the inevitable consequence.

von Berchem

No. 382 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, June 12, 1939

Acting on instructions I called upon Count Szembek, the Vice-Minister, yesterday in order to protest vigorously against the various libels on the Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor and to demand the punishment of the guilty parties. In doing so I not only made use of the enclosures received along with your instructions, but also drew his attention to the incidents in theatres and cabarets, to the burning of effigies of the Fuehrer as also to other propaganda which has recently been carried even into the schools. As instructed I stated that all these incidents were merely the result of the inaction of the Polish authorities, and of the incomprehensible tolerance they have hitherto shown in this matter, despite repeated interventions on the part of the Embassy and the Consulates.

Regarding the leaflet containing particularly coarse and vulgar libels on the Fuehrer, Count Szembek replied that the Polish Government had already taken steps and had ordered the confiscation of these leaflets. I replied that the confiscation of the leaflets did not suffice in this case owing to the fact that the leaflets if taken away from one seller would be

secretly sold by another elsewhere, as had been shown by the fact these leaflets had been offered for sale not only in Kattowitz and other towns in Upper Silesia, but also in Lodz and Warsaw. Only the energetic prosecution and punishment of the offenders could be effective, and on this I must insist, the more so as the Polish Government had adequate legal means at their disposal by which to enforce punishment.

Count Szembek then tried to evade the issue by drawing attention to the attitude of the German press. From a pile of press cuttings which had obviously been carefully selected, he took an article published in the *Deutsche Diplomatisch-Politische Korrespondenz* of June 12 and read a paragraph to which he took particular exception because in it Dirschau and Graudenz had been referred to as German cities. He even dared to assert that no such annexationist ideas appeared in the Polish press. I was able to reply that point-blank requests for revision not only had been expressed almost daily in the Polish press but quite recently also in a ministerial speech made by M. Koscialkowski. Apart from this, I objected to any comparison between the German press and the unbridled productions of Polish newspapers, and argued that the complaint lodged by me concerned not merely general press matters, but libels on, and insults to, the Head of the German State of a character the like of which was not to be found anywhere in the German press.

In the further course of the conversation Count Szembek repeatedly tried to treat the complaint made by me as a matter connected exclusively with the press. In reply I again pointed out that my present intervention was not concerned with general complaints regarding the press. I made emphatic demands for an investigation and for the punishment of the guilty parties, arguing that all the cases mentioned by me, as, for instance, the various caricatures, have all the ear-marks of insults. When, in conclusion, I expressed my astonishment at Count Szembek's lack of appreciation of these perfectly obvious facts he adopted a different attitude and promised to reconsider the whole matter.

von Moltke

No. 383 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, June 16, 1939

By the Voivode's order dated the 15th inst. the *Evangelisches Vereinshaus Herberge zur Heimat,* an association in Posen, was liquidated, and on the same day the property of the association, consisting of the clubhouse and other possessions, were handed over to a Polish liquidator.

This large building, situated at No. 19 Aleja Marszalka Pilsudskiego, opposite the German *Landesgenossenschaft,* the University, and the Castle, is a most valuable piece of property owing to its favorable location and the excellent state of upkeep, so that together with the confiscated furnishings and fixtures it represents a value of several hundred thousand zloty. Its special significance lies in the fact that it was the last remaining building available for cultural purposes which was at the disposal of the German minority in the City and Voivodeship of Posen. The building contains the Protestant Hospice with about 40 rooms and 50 beds, the only German hotel in Posen up to the present time. The public rooms comprising a hall which accommodates 400 persons, and other rooms, served the German organizations in Posen for social meetings. It was the only large hall available after the confiscation of the "German House" at the beginning of this year. After the closing of the "German House" the German Theatre continued its activities in the hall of the *Vereinshaus,* where large meetings and social events of the German minority, the sessions of the General Synod, and the patriotic festivities of the German nationals were held. The premises were further used by the Men's Choral Society, the Bach Society, the Young Men's and Young Women's Protestant Association and Young People's Society. The building also accommodated the *Herberge zur Heimat,* and rooms were at the disposal of the Apprentices' Association and also of the Young Girls' Friendly Society for the accommodation of young girls passing through the city, and of female employees. The liquidator has given notice for the end of the month to all employees working in the establishment, especially in the hospice. Thus a considerable number of members of the German minority, families as well as individuals, will be deprived of their livelihood. The part of the building facing the street houses the Evangelical Society's Book-Shop, a branch of the German Bank of Trade and Commerce (*Volksdeutsche Bank für Handel und Gewerbe*) and a number of shops the proprietors of which have been given notice to evacuate the premises within three days.

With the confiscation of the *Vereinshaus,* the Polish authorities have deliberately dealt our Germanism a heavy blow. As the Casino House at Bromberg, the house of the Men's Choral Society in Lodz, and the German House in Tarnowitz have also been closed, this is undoubtedly a far reaching measure adopted against the German minority.

Walther

No. 384 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, June 19, 1939

I enclose herewith a list of 52 additional cases of maltreatment of German nationals and members of the German minority.

There has been an increase of late in reports stating that members of the German minority, both in rural districts and in Posen, are being menaced with shouts such as, "If war comes you will all be hanged."

Walther

No. 385 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, June 19, 1939

In the course of the last few weeks the position of the German minority has grown considerably worse, and the campaign of hate has developed to such an extent as I have never experienced during my long period of office here.

On Tuesday the 13th inst. Senator Hasbach called upon the Premier once more, in another attempt to bring about an improvement in the situation. Immediately afterwards, the German minority received the heaviest blow so far, namely, the confiscation of the German House in Bromberg, the closing down and confiscation of the German House in Lodz, of the *Evangelisches Vereinshaus* in Posen, and the German House in Tarnowitz. Investigations are still going on concerning the extensive action aimed at the suspension of the activity of all organizations in Volhynia.

Needless to say I shall discuss these extraordinarily grave administrative measures with the Polish Foreign Ministry. On the strength of recent experience, however, I doubt that they will feel inclined to alter their attitude towards the German minority. In my previous conversation with Count Szembek, on which I reported on June 15,* I most emphatically drew his attention to the threatened acumination of the situation as a whole, and the tremendously grave position of the German minority. I also expressed my astonishment at the fact that despite the already prevailing anti-German feeling of the population, which again and again

* Cf. No. 382.

resulted in new incidents, the authorities themselves took part in this movement by rigorous administrative measures directed against the German minority.

Count Szembek referred to the confiscation of the Polish House at Ratibor, whereupon I replied to him that he knew very well that that was only a reprisal for the confiscation of the German Houses in Karwin and Oderberg, and that we were prepared to rescind the confiscation at Ratibor the moment the Polish authorities on their part rescinded the confiscations in Karwin and Oderberg. I told him that we were sliding downhill, and that we viewed future developments with great anxiety. In answer to my question as to whether he did not consider it advisable to put a stop to the dangerous policy of the home authorities, Count Szembek merely replied by a resigned shrug of his shoulders. He referred with regret to the rapid aggravation of the situation, but showed no initiative whatever for bringing about an abatement of hostilities as I suggested.

It is a regrettable symptom that even a man like Count Szembek, who hitherto has always shown his willingness to remove difficulties, obviously no longer sees any possibility of counteracting the dangerous development. It is difficult to say whether this is due to the fact that the Foreign Ministry do not want to intervene, or whether they cannot assert themselves in opposition to the Nationalist tendencies of the military. In my previous reports I have pointed out again and again how difficult the position of Foreign Minister Beck has become during the past few months, and how the military circles have gained increasing influence on Polish foreign policy. I am not under the impression that the situation has changed in any way.

von Moltke

No. 386 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, June 22, 1939

I have the honor to submit herewith a copy of a further file of cases illustrating excesses committed against members of the German community. This list, which covers the entire Polish state, was compiled by the Young-German Party (*Jungdeutsche Partei*), and despatched to the Polish Premier by Herr Wiesner on the 19th inst.*

Nöldeke

* This list deals with several hundreds of cases concerning dismissals, damage to property, punishment inflicted, attacks and maltreatment.

No. 387 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, June 23, 1939

By an order of the Voivode of Pommerellen, dated June 20, referring to Article 26, Point 4 of the Societies Statute, the "so-called" Order of St. John has been declared "legally non-existent."

In Pommerellen the Order of St. John owned St. John's Hospital at Dirschau, built in 1894, and also another hospital at Briesen. Both hospitals were taken over by liquidators on the 21st inst. The German Sisters of the Order of St. John at the Dirschau hospital had to leave the institution on the same day, and were replaced by Polish Catholic Sisters of the Order of St. Vincent.

The Polish press in my district has hailed with satisfaction this further theft of German property, without making the slightest attempt to justify such procedure.

von Küchler

No. 388 The German Consul at Lodz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Lodz, June 24, 1939

I have received the following authentic account of the incidents which took place at Pabianice on the 22nd and 23rd inst.:

Late in the afternoon of the 22nd inst., a crowd, which comprised a conspicuously large number of supporters of the Government O. Z. N. Party, gathered in front of the German Gymnasium. The crowd demanded entrance to the hall in which some members of the German minority were engaged in gymnastic practice. On being refused admittance, the mob smashed the entrance door and several windows and forced their way into the hall. In the hall itself various objects were demolished, and a number of small utensils, such as crockery, etc., stolen. Polish chauvinistic speeches were made from the platform. A minority-German who happened to be present, by the name of Keil, son of a bookseller of that name at Pabianice, was threatened and attempted to make his escape by jumping over several fences. But he was caught by the crowd and beaten.

After demolishing the school the crowd moved on to the meeting house of the United Brethren. The chapel was especially badly damaged.

All the German hymn-books and other literature, including some German Bibles, were torn up by the crowd.

For the Consul

von Trützschler

No. 389 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, June 26, 1939

Recently the Polish authorities have evidently set about systematically removing even the last few remaining German workmen and employees from local works. In the larger industrial concerns so-called national committees have been formed consisting of members of the Polish West Marches Society and other anti-German associations. Their task is to check the lists of those employed in the works, to ascertain the names of Germans employed there, and to report them to the management in order to obtain their immediate dismissal. The national committees which are working hand in hand with the Polish Labor Authorities intend to propose the dismissal of all employees who:

1. belong to German organizations,
2. send, or have previously sent, their children to German schools,
3. attend German divine service or are members of German libraries,
4. though they have joined Polish vocational organizations, must in view of their conduct and their past be considered members of the German minority.

The extent of this fresh wave of dismissals, which is characteristic of the attitude of the local authorities toward the whole situation, cannot as yet be gauged. As it is, the livelihood of hundreds of members of the German minority will be affected.

Nöldeke

No. 390 The Foreign Office to the German Ambassador in Warsaw

Telegram

(Translation)

Berlin, June 26, 1939

In reply to Polish action against the *Evangelisches Vereinshaus* in Posen, the Casino Society in Bromberg, and the Men's Choral Society

in Lodz, our intention is to close the *Dom Polski* at Buschdorf, district of Flatow. The closing of this house, in which numerous training courses, etc., are being held would mean a heavy blow to Polish national interests. Moreover, according to the Ministry for Home Affairs, excesses by the indignant German border population are to be expected, unless the closing is effected at an early date.

I request an immediate telegraphic reply concerning reprisals in general, and contemplated measures against *Dom Polski* at Buschdorf in particular.

Woermann

No. 391 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, June 27, 1939

German counter-measures can by no means be expected to induce the Poles to refrain from further action possibly considered necessary by them. On the contrary, they will, as the Ratibor incident has shown,* utilize our reprisals as a welcome pretext, and as justification abroad for any further measures they may adopt against the German minority.

In the present situation reprisals are, therefore, of no practical value whatever; they only blur the now perfectly clear picture of the Polish one-sided fight of destruction against the German minority.

As regards the Buschdorf incident in particular, it is to be feared that the closing of the Dom Polski will produce the same unfavorable effect as the action taken with regard to the Polish Home in Ratibor. Although I can quite understand the indignation of the border population, I am inclined to believe that the interests of the hard-pressed and struggling German minority in Poland should come first.

Moltke

No. 392 The German Embassy in Warsaw to the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Verbal Note

(Translation)

Warsaw, June 27, 1939

The German Embassy, on behalf of their Government, have the honor to draw the attention of the Foreign Ministry to the following incident:—

* Cf. No. 385.

According to a report in the *Gazeta Pomarska,* No. 116, of May 20-21, Colonel Switalski of the General Staff made a speech in the name of the Polish army on the occasion of the church visitation by Bishops Okoniewski and Dominik who had come to Graudenz for that purpose. In the course of his speech, he spoke of the German Reich as "the neighbor eternally fighting us" and as an "enemy." With regard to the census taken in Germany on May 17 he stated that "the persecution of our brethren is to culminate in an overwhelming blow," and concluded his speech as follows: "Pray with us therefore on this day of the census, that our brethren may not waver, that their time of tribulation may be shortened, and that a great deed, another Grunwald,* may release them from bondage, and secure for us a corresponding peace."

The German Embassy, on behalf of their Government, have the honor to protest against this anti-German speech made by a representative of the Polish Army on an official occasion, in which he openly laid claim to German territory.

No. 393 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)
Thorn, July 3, 1939

On Friday the 30th ult., the Annual General Meeting of the Polish Agricultural Society of Pommerellen took place at Gdynia in the presence of M. Poniatowski, Minister of Agriculture, M. Raczkiewicz, Voivode of Pommerellen, and many other leading personages. In the course of his speech M. Poniatowski declared that Agrarian Reform would shortly be intensified in Pommerellen. Following this speech, a resolution was passed demanding, among other things, the quickest possible parcelling out of German estates in Pommerellen, the expulsion from Poland of those who had exercised their option in favor of Germany, and the promulgation of a law decreeing that Polish nationals who had fled to the Reich should be deprived of their Polish nationality and have their property confiscated.

von Küchler

No. 394 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)
Warsaw, July 5, 1939

As I have repeatedly reported, the oppression of the German minority group in church matters has become more acute. As the German popula-

* "Grunwald" is the Polish name for the Battle of Tannenberg, A. D. 1410.

tion are mainly Protestant, Polish policy aims at paralyzing the organization of the German Protestant Church as far as possible. In this connection developments must be mentioned which have resulted in the dismissal from office of Parson Kleindienst from Volhynia, revered by all on account of his personal merits and unshakable faith. He was finally expelled from his native land in which his family had lived for more than two centuries. Attempts made by the Embassy to obtain a withdrawal of this decision which had naturally caused great indignation among the Germans of Volhynia, and even among the German minority in Western Poland, have unfortunately had no result.

To what extent acts of violence against the Protestant Church and its ministers have increased recently is shown by the accompanying list of 17 incidents, to the correctness of which witnesses have testified.

von Moltke

Memorandum

1. On March 2, the large window of Christ Church, Posen, was smashed, as also the windows of the Superintendent's study.
2. On March 12, Parson Diestelkamp was assaulted at Wisseck by 15 to 20 young fellows, kicked off his motor cycle, and roughly handled. The police present made no attempt to intervene.
3. During March, 22 window-panes were smashed in the parsonage at Schokken.
4. On March 29, a crowd rioted in front of the parsonage at Kruschwitz, and smashed 21 window-panes.
5. On March 31, Superintendent Assmann of Bromberg and Presbyter Quade of Labischin were pelted with stones.
6. On April 15, Herr Ortlieb, curate of Neubarkoschin, was cruelly maltreated in the street and kicked about the head.
7. During the night of April 18, 63 window-panes were smashed in the parsonage and meeting-house at Lonkorss.
8. On April 19, Parson Schenk of Hallkirch was injured by having stones thrown at him.
9. On April 28, tombstones were destroyed in the cemetery of Neulaube near Lissa.
10. On the same day an attack was made on the parsonage at Zirke.
11. On May 2, Herr Lenz, a Sunday School teacher, was knocked off his bicycle between Schubin and Klein-Salzdorf and roughly handled. His bicycle and despatch case were stolen.

12. In the night of May 3, the church at Briesen was polluted by persons unknown.

13. On May 7, the holding of a service at Rakot was prevented by a crowd that forced its way into the church: on Ascension Day the door of the same church was nailed up by the Poles.

14. On May 24, the window behind the altar in the church at Rheinsberg was smashed.

15. On May 24, Parson Schenk of Hallkirch was again pelted with stones when driving in a country district.

16. On June 2, 16 window-panes were smashed in the parsonage at Staykowo.

17. On June 5 and 6, an attack was made on the parsonage at Hohensalza. Stones were thrown at Superintendent Diestelkamp, who thereby received head injuries.

No. 395 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, July 10, 1939

The drive of the Polish authorities against German co-operative societies has become still more intense. The measures taken are directed in particular against the German co-operative dairies. Three large dairies of this kind were recently closed down by order of the police, among them, on the 6th inst., the large up-to-date Posen Dairy. The reasons given for closing down these dairies were that investigations had shown hygienic deficiencies in their equipment. These reasons were all the more astonishing as it is well known that the Posen Dairy is very well run and excellently equipped.

Another dairy was closed down at Wollstein after a vain attempt on the part of the Poles to obtain the majority by increasing the number of Polish members.

These measures are all part of the Polish attempt to ruin German enterprises and organizations by malicious and often false interpretation of the law. In this way the German minority has lost about 60 co-operative dairies during the last few years.

Walther

No. 396 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, July 10, 1939

The war of extermination waged by the Polish authorities against the German community here has attained dimensions hitherto unknown. It is directed just as much against the economic existence of individual Germans as against the existence of their organizations. It is significant that now the Polish authorities no longer even attempt to base their actions against members of the German minority on any legal foundation. I add a further list of sixty-five cases.

The lists sent to you, however, cannot claim to be in any way complete, as generally the Consulate-General is informed of only a small number of the actual transgressions. For most of the Germans injured by assault or by the use of other measures are afraid to report their grievances to the German organizations or the Consulate-General.

For the Consul-General:

Graf

No. 397 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, July 11, 1939

In accordance with my instructions I have made very serious representations to the Deputy of the Foreign Minister, Count Szembek, concerning the murder of the German national, Alois Sornik. Count Szembek, who proved to be well informed of the details of the case, pointed out that this was not a political affair, but that, according to news so far received by the Foreign Ministry, the murder had been committed out of jealousy. To this I replied that even though personal reasons may have played their part, the commission of this grave crime was without doubt to be ascribed in the first place to the unbridled and systematic anti-German campaign of hate which was tolerated by the Polish Government. Finally Count Szembek admitted that the anti-German feeling prevailing at the moment in Poland had certainly not been without influence on the criminal.

In this connection I also mentioned the anti-German persecution, which had lately become almost unbearable in the Upper Silesian administrative district of the Voivode Grazynski, who might justly be called

the grave-digger of German-Polish understanding. Moreover I remarked that by this time I had got the impression that there was not the least point in even broaching the minority question, after our readiness to come to an understanding, which I had expressed on my last conversation with Count Szembek,* had been answered on the part of Poland in a manner which unfortunately could not be misunderstood, by the closing of the German houses in Posen,** Lodz, Bromberg, and Tarnowitz.

Count Szembek received my remarks in silent resignation, as he had done in our conversation of June 14.*** This conversation again confirms the view that, in the present situation, there are no longer any prospects of making the minority problems the subject of discussions with the Polish Government. It has always been difficult to broach the minority problem in the Polish Foreign Ministry. But as the daily increasing number of outrages against the German minority shows, the Polish Government obviously feel themselves so powerful by virtue of the British *carte blanche* that they no longer deem it necessary to consider German interests in their dealings with the minority, although they ought to realize that thereby German-Polish relations are strained almost unbearably.

von Moltke

No. 398 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Posen, July 12, 1939

At the end of this school year the following German elementary schools have been closed:

1. Karmin, District of Jarotschin, 53 pupils,
2. Strzalkowo, District of Wreschen, 45 pupils,
3. Zatom Nowy (Neuzattum), District of Birnbaum, 22 pupils,
4. Mechnacz, District of Birnbaum, 19 pupils,
5. Strzyzewo-Smykowe (Striensen), District of Gnesen, 32 pupils,
6. Zdziechowa (Zechau), District of Gnesen, 43 pupils,
7. Grebocin (Gramtschen), District of Thorn, 46 children,
8. Czempin, District of Kosten, 22 children,

* Cf. No. 385.
** Cf. No. 383.
*** Cf. No. 385.

9. Daleszynek, District of Birnbaum, 19 pupils,
10. Gnesen, 209 pupils,
11. Wollstein, 81 pupils,
12. Miedzychod (Birnbaum), 102 pupils,
13. Gniew (Mewe), District of Dirschau, 48 children.*

Walther

No. 399 The German Consul at Teschen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Teschen, July 13, 1939

The Voivode of Kattowitz has prohibited any futher activity of the German Dramatic Society (*Deutscher Theaterverein*) in Teschen; the reasons stated are that this activity endangers the public security and the protection of the frontiers. That the reasons for this decree are only a pretext requires no further explanation.

The property of the Society consists chiefly of the theatre itself, a storehouse and a dwelling-house, as well as an abundant stock of stage-properties. Considering the fact that the theatre has room for six hundred people and is in very good repair, the value of the property of the Society should be estimated at about 500,000 zloty.

This new blow to the German element in this town is a particularly heavy and regrettable one. The theatre was originally built by a German architect, with capital provided by the German minority. It represents an important, if not the most important center of German culture in the Olsa District. Above all, it was the last German-owned theatre in the whole of Poland. The indignation of the German population of this town is naturally very great.

For the Consul:

Ehrenhauss

No. 400 The German Consul at Lemberg to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Lemberg, July 15, 1939

During the month of June the Polish authorities carried out severe measures against the German organizations in Volhynia. Economically

* Since 1924, 425 of the then existing 557 German schools have been closed by the Polish authorities. Cf. also No. 12, and note.

the Germans were hit by the closing of numerous German co-operative societies. Especially brutal measures are taken by the Polish police against the German organizations, which are fought with the same means as the political and economic corporations of the Ukrainians. Generally the Polish police proceeds in such a manner that the leaders of the local groups are ill-treated until they sign a pledge to dissolve the local group. The leader of the local group in Harazdze near Luck was subjected to particularly cruel ill-treatment. Similar cases have become known to me from the following German settlements in Volhynia: Wicentówka, Stanislawka, Stary Zapust, Podhajce, and Ochocin.

Seelos

No. 401 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, July, 20, 1939

I send you a new list of outrages against members of the German minority. I should like to stress the fact that the nearly two hundred cases of this list are only such as have happened in the period between July 5 and July 20.

For the Consul-General

Graf

No. 402 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Kattowitz, July 24, 1939

In Upper Silesia the outrages against minority Germans continue. Between July 1 and July 20 more than 30 assaults on minority Germans were perpetrated; furthermore a number of people were ill-treated and arrested, and windows were smashed. The number of German homes that were searched by the police has lately increased to a considerable degree.

For the Consul-General

Schüller

No. 403 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, July 25, 1939

The soldiery took a considerable part in the outrages against the members of the German minority. Thus, on July 2, after their houses had been searched without result, two Germans of the village of Schanzendorf in the district of Bromberg were ordered by an officer to kneel down in the street with their faces to a fence. They were then so maltreated by soldiers that blood poured from their noses, mouths and ears. Polish church-goers who happened to pass by were asked by the officers to spit upon the Germans.

I have reports on a number of cases in which members of the German minority were stopped by Polish patrols. Whenever in such cases the Polish soldiers find out that the Germans have not a perfect command of the Polish language, threats and acts of violence follow almost regularly.

For the Consul-General

Graf

No. 404 The German Consul at Teschen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Teschen, July 28, 1939

Though at first one might have assumed that the wholesale notices given to workmen and employees of German nationality or descent would show at least a temporary lull, this assumption has proved incorrect. On the contrary, notices are being given continually.

Even at this moment the sum-total of my information shows that within my whole official district there is hardly an employee of German nationality or descent in a responsible position but has received notice. Moreover, we are again confirmed in our fears that by this autumn no German workmen or employees at all will be employed in this district.

It is noteworthy that the Polish authorities are again exerting considerable pressure upon industrial enterprises to make them mete out dismissals.

The favorite reason given for such dismissals—if, indeed, any reason is given, save that the employees concerned are German—is that they are sending their children to German schools. In this case again it is typical

of the attitude of the Polish authorities that they do not grant any unemployment relief to the people dismissed for the reason just stated, because their dismissal was caused "by their own fault."

For the Consul

Ehrenhauss

No. 405 The German Consul at Teschen to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Teschen, August 3, 1939

Pursuant to an official decree the German school of Alexanderfeld near Bielitz was closed today. The school was attended by 155 children. It has existed for 70 years.

The Commercial School at Bielitz, which is attended by 220 children, has received warning to the effect that it will be closed shortly.

Damerau

No. 406 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Kattowitz, August 8, 1939

According to strictly confidential information the Germans of this town will have to expect another heavy blow in the form of numerous arrests. Information is based on several intimations to identical effect from Polish police circles. At one place a bundle of signed arrest warrants is said to have been seen.

Nöldeke

No. 407 The German Consul at Lemberg to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Lemberg, August 9, 1939

The vigorous German element which settled in Galicia 150 years ago and numbers about 55,000 souls, has overcome many a crisis during the

last decades. The present crisis, however, goes deeper, as it is not only of an economic nature but also threatens the foundations of the life and culture of the German minority. For about three months now every form of expression of their national life and culture has been rendered more and more difficult to the Germans or even impossible.

Several German schools, such as the Roman Catholic private parish schools of Angelówka and Pöchersdorf and the Protestant schools of Kaltwasser and Rosenberg, were closed as long ago as June 1939. Further elementary schools are expected to meet with the same fate at the beginning of the next school year in September.

Both in state-owned and private Polish works the German employees and workmen have been systematically dismissed during the last few months. Even the manager of a paper mill owned by a member of the German minority has been already officially reprimanded by the *starosta*, because too many Germans were employed. Thus even in works owned by members of the German minority the opportunities for finding work are limited. The second and third sons of farmers are gradually finding every prospect of work blocked.

In the villages with a mixed population the Germans are under constant pressure, owing to the hostile attitude of the Poles. In case of an aggravation of the German-Polish tension they will have to expect the worst, even incendiarism and danger to life. Some weeks ago nearly the whole village of Schönthal was wilfully destroyed by fire. At another place an attempt was made to set fire to the crops. Young Germans in Galicia see that the future no longer contains possibilities for them; they are ruthlessly oppressed by being subjected to chicanery, flogging, etc. Consequently, about two months ago an unrestrained exodus set in, which deprived some German settlements, e. g. Josefsberg, of almost their entire young male population.

Seelos

No. 408 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, August 10, 1939

The following circular order of the Regional Revenue Office of Graudenz shows the ruthless manner in which the war against everything German is waged. In it the Polish financial authorities are asked to reduce the property of the German minority by all available means.

For the Consul-General

Graf

Enclosure

Graudenz Regional Revenue Office

(Translation)

Graudenz, July 14, 1939

No. 1—155/39/Secret

To all Superintendents of the Revenue Offices
in the District of the Regional Revenue Office of Graudenz

The continuous aggravation of the relations between the German minority and the Polish State has rendered it necessary to reduce the property of the German minority in Poland by all available means.

The Regional Revenue Office therefore recommend to the Superintendents of the Revenue Offices to deal with all minorities within their districts in accordance with these instructions.

To achieve this there are the following possibilities:—

In the assessment of taxes, in the statement of the turnover and income of the tax-payer, refusal to admit reductions of taxes, and equally the refusal of facilities for payment and payment in instalments when taxes are in arrears.

The Regional Revenue Office

A. Klausal

Head of Department I

No. 409 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Posen, August 12, 1939

German Library Association in Posen with all local groups and offices in the provinces of Posen and Pommerellen suspended by *Burgh Starosta* of Posen yesterday, rooms sealed, bank accounts closed, temporary administration by Polish curator. Reason: discovery of periodicals without postal permit for their distribution in Poland. Reason not valid as only copies published prior to withdrawal of postal permit were found.

Local Labor Exchange Bureau closed by police, searching of the house continues.

Walther

No. 410 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

Berlin, August 16, 1939

Vice-Consul Schüller of the German Consulate-General in Kattowitz just telephoned from Beuthen as follows:—

The apprehensions of the Consulate-General with regard to impending arrests of members of the German minority* have been confirmed. On Monday and Tuesday houses of minority Germans were searched extensively; in connection with this very many minority Germans—at least several hundred—have been arrested, among them numerous leaders of German minority organizations, such as had not fled beforehand.

Schliep

No. 411 The German Consul-General at Posen to the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Posen, August 15, 1939

The Theological College of the United Evangelical Church in Poland will be closed as from January 1, 1940, by a decree of the 11th inst., by the Minister for Religious Denominations and Public Education.

The pretext given for the closing is that the College has not complied with the condition that the majority of teachers at the College should be competent to do research work.

For the Consul-General

Matuschka

No. 412 The German Consul-General at Kattowitz to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Kattowitz, August 16, 1939

Action announced by the Polish authorities** in progress since August 14. Numerous houses searched and people arrested, especially in the circles of the Young German Party *(Jungdeutsche Partei)*, the German People's League *(Deutscher Volksbund)*, and the trade unions; number arrested approximately 200. German newspapers, trade unions, etc., closed down; frontier almost completely closed. Action against fugitives still continues. Guards and armaments along the frontier increased.

Nöldeke

* Cf. No. 406.
** Cf. Nos. 406 and 410.

No. 413 The German Consul at Teschen to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Teschen, August 17, 1939

Arrests still continue. List of names of arrested follows. In Oderberg especially population alarmed by police patrols.

Reason to believe information from trustworthy source that aim of this wave of arrests is to procure hostages. Since August 15 local frontier traffic completely stopped. Eight to ten thousand workmen principally affected.

Damerau

No. 414 The German Consul at Teschen to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Teschen, August 18, 1939

On August 15, 1939, the following societies in Bielitz were officially closed:—

The German Gymnastic Club

The German Choral Society

The German Hiking Club

The German Apprentices Association

Five licenses for selling liquor were withdrawn. In houses searched by the police several wireless sets were confiscated.

von der Damerau

No. 415 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, August 20, 1939

During the last few months the German Foreign Office has continually received reports from the German Consulates in Poland about the cruel maltreatment to which members of the German minority are subjected by the Poles who have been more and more lashed to fury and have

abandoned themselves to unbridled fanaticism. In the Appendix, thirty-eight especially grave cases have been collected, in which the remarkable similarity of method is to be noticed with which the assaults on minority Germans are staged. This seems to justify the question to what degree these excesses are tolerated or fomented by the authorities. In spite of the assurances repeatedly given to the German Embassy in Warsaw by competent Polish authorities, according to which the Polish Government were exerting all their influence in order to prevent the persecutions of Germans, one cannot but get the impression that the excesses against the Germans are fomented as far as possible in official quarters in order thus to maintain the war spirit of the Polish nation.

Bergmann

Appendix

1. On April 2, on the farm belonging to the minority German Pankratz, eight members of the German Sport Club at Klein Klomorsk, in the District of Schwetz, were attacked by Poles, who fell upon the Germans with sticks and flails. One German, who had been knocked down, was pushed into the cesspool. Pankratz was so badly beaten up that the doctor said he would be unable to work for a period of six weeks. The next day Pankratz was arrested by the police.

2. On April 17, 1939, the minority German Fritz Pawlik, of Ciszowieco, was so badly beaten by a group of Poles, led by the Pole Malcharek, that he had to be taken by the police to his parents' house in an unconscious condition. Although he was still unconscious on the following day, the Polish authorities refused to admit him to a hospital.

3. On April 19, 1939, the minority German Peter Kordys and Richard Mateja, of Kattowitz, were attacked by about forty insurgents. The two Germans were so beaten that Kordys fled covered with blood, and Mateja was left lying there, seriously injured. He was carried away by the police, and thrown into prison, without medical examination and treatment.

4. On April 23, 1939, Cofalka, an old man, who was an invalid, and hard of hearing, was delivering copies of the newspaper *Kattowitzer Zeitung* in Chorzow, when he was attacked by insurgents and beaten till the blood flowed. As a result of this assault, Cofalka has become completely deaf in one ear.

5. On April 27, Hermann and Emil Mathies, of Liebenwalde in the District of Schwetz, were attacked in their home and so brutally treated that the one had several teeth knocked out and his lower jaw smashed, while the other was knocked down and left unconscious.

6. On April 28, a minority German, Fritz Köppke of Zbiczno in the District of Strasburg, was attacked by members of the Polish Re-

servists Association, and so brutally man-handled that he had two ribs fractured. For weeks he had to stay in bed and was unfit for work.

7. On April 30, an attack was made on several young minority Germans of Piaski in the District of Schwetz. One of them, Eckert, was so badly injured that he was left lying unconscious. Another, Oswald Frey of Schönreich, had several teeth knocked out.

8. On May 3, Franz Hybiorz, a minority German, of Bijasowice, was attacked by about twenty Poles in Reservist's uniforms and so brutally beaten with rubber truncheons that he remained lying unconscious in the street.

9. On May 4, in the station of Bismarckhütte, Ehrenfried Heiber, a minority German, was attacked from behind and knocked unconscious with a blunt object. He received a wound approximately four inches long and half an inch wide. The police refused to take down the report of this assault.

10. On May 5, Rauhut, a pupil of the German Secondary School in Bromberg, was attacked by several Poles, who hit him on the head with a bottle, with such force that the bottle was smashed and Rauhut collapsed with severe cuts in the head. When he came to, he was again knocked down by the passers-by, who had applauded this brutal action.

11. On May 9, two minority Germans, Richard Fandrey of Neukirchen in the District of Schubin, and Damrau, a farmer, were attacked by about thirty Poles and so brutally beaten with sticks and stones that their faces were battered beyond recognition.

12. On May 12, Valentin Jendrzejak, an insurgent, forced his way into the home of Robert Robotta of Kattowitz, a minority German, seized a chair and struck Robotta with it; Robotta received a blow on the left arm, which fractured his wrist. Then the Pole kicked the helpless man repeatedly in the abdomen and in the hips. Robotta's daughter wanted to ring up the police from Poloczek, the grocer's, but the shopkeeper did not allow her to do so, as according to him the police were only there to protect the Poles.

13. On May 14 and 15, hundreds of members of the German minority of Tomaschow, Konstantynow, and other places in the Voivodeship of Lodz were attacked, their homes plundered and destroyed. In this pogrom one minority German was killed, ten others were so seriously injured that there was little hope of their recovery, numerous other minority Germans were more slightly injured.

14. On May 16, 1939, Leo Krawczyk, in insurgent, attacked Adelheit Cichy, a minority German in Kattowitz. He kicked her in the groin with his boot and tried to throw her down the stairs of the house. Frau Cichy received numerous injuries about the head, thigh, groin, and hands.

15. On May 18, Paul Enders of Luck, a minority German, was arrested without cause. When he was being questioned about his membership in the Young German Party, he was repeatedly struck in the face and kicked in the stomach. On May 20 he was taken to Rowno in chains, and released there on May 25.

16. On May 24, Erhard Ossadnik of Kattowitz, a minority German, was attacked by four Poles in uniforms because he had spoken German to a friend in the street. He received numerous injuries on the left side of his face, and four of his front teeth were knocked out.

17. On May 27, Josef Mazur of Kobior, a minority German, was attacked by a large group of Poles. He was knocked unconscious with rubber truncheons. In the medical examination, numerous effusions and cuts in the head, face, and ears were found, as well as numerous welts of a reddish blue color and covered with clotted blood on the chest, back and buttocks.

18. On May 29, Albert Kränk, a rustic laborer of Kzywka, while working in the fields, was attacked by two Poles who had disguised their faces. His penis and left testicle were so severely injured by stabs and blows that he had to be taken to the hospital of Lessen for treatment.

19. On May 29, 1939, Stühmer of Neudorf in the District of Briesen, a minority German, was arrested and struck dead by the Poles when he was about to cross the frontier. His body, very badly mutilated, was identified by his relatives in the hospital of Graudenz.

20. On June 1, 1939, the minority German Johann Burdzik of Giszowiec-Myslowice, a disabled miner, was attacked by an insurgent. The latter first took him by the throat, then threw him into a ditch, and injured him severely with a stick. When the insurgent tried to put out Burzik's eyes, he was pulled off by passers-by, so that Burdzik got off with effusions in the eye, numerous bruises and injuries caused by blows in the face and the body, and two teeth knocked out.

21. On June 2, Theodor Stehr, a minority German of Konstantynow, was attacked by a Pole. When he offered resistance, four more Poles hastened to the spot and beat him to such a degree, that he collapsed and had to be taken to hospital with a fractured rib and other injuries.

22. On June 5, Wilhelm Kübel, a minority German of Kostuchna, who carries around copies of the newspaper *Kattowitzer Zeitung,* was robbed of his bundle of newspapers. When he tried to regain possession of it, he was knocked down by other Poles, and badly kicked when lying on the ground. The police did not interfere.

23. On June 6, Georg Kindler of Bykowina, and Bernhard Harmada of Nowa Wies, both minority Germans, were attacked by Poles. Kindler

was struck in the ribs with a bottle with such force that the bottle smashed. Harmada, a badly disabled war invalid with a stiff leg, was so severely beaten with beer bottles, rubber truncheons and a walking-stick that he had wounds and bruises all over his body.

24. In the night of June 11, 1939, the minority German Anton Podszwa, of Trzyniec, an innkeeper, was shot dead on his way home by persons unknown.

25. On June 15, Alois Sornik, a German national, was hit on the head from behind by the Polish forest laborer Onufrak of Zielona, and was so severely injured that he died a few days later.

26. On June 17, the minority German, Fritz Reinke, of Tonowo in the District of Znin, was knocked down from behind by two Polish farm hands with battens taken from a wooden fence. The Poles continued beating Reinke when he was lying on the ground, so that he had numerous deep cuts and effusions in the head, face, shoulders, arms, and hands, and is incapacitated for work for the time being.

27. On June 17, the minority German Hans Zierott of Oberausmass in the District of Kulm, was attacked by three men who tried to force him to say "Hitler is a swine." When he refused he was threatened with a knife, and thus compelled to comply with their demand. Zierott is a cripple and unable to defend himself.

28. On June 20, 1939, the minority Germans Völpel, Dilk, and Sawadski, all leading members of the Harazdze branch (District of Luck) of the Young German Party, were summoned to the chief of police. Völpel was so maltreated with blows that his lower lip was cut through; then a policeman kicked him in the abdomen several times and dragged him about by the hair, till he signed his resignation from the Young German Party, and together with his friends, brought in a motion on the following day that the whole local branch should be voluntarily dissolved. A short time afterwards, the Polish press reported that local branches of the Young German Party were dissolving voluntarily on the grounds of general outlook (*Weltanschauung*).

29. On June 22, the minority German Luzie Imiolcyk, of Chorzow, was attacked inside the entrance of her house by two neighbors, the Polish women Maciejkowiak and Wietrzniak, and badly beaten although she was carrying a child of fourteen months in her arms. In the end she was thrown to the ground and some of her hair was torn out. When she reported the incident to the police, she was arrested for having insulted the Polish woman Maciejkowiak.

30. When, on July 2, the minority German Luise Sprenzel was cycling to Zytna in the District of Rybnik, she was attacked by two insurgents and so severely struck on the forehead that she fell from her bicycle and lay on the road unconscious.

31. On July 7, 1939, the minority German Julius Saeftel, of Szopienice in the District of Myslowice, a badly disabled war invalid with only one arm, was struck with fists and injured in the face by five Poles after the funeral of a minority German, which had already been disturbed by Poles.

32. On July 8, 1939, the Pole Kaczmarek forced his way into the home of Margarete Plichta, a minority German of Tarnowskie, by breaking in the door with a hammer. Then he set upon the German woman with his hammer and knocked a weapon, which she had grasped in self-defense, from her hand so that her hand was badly injured. Then he took her by the throat and threatened to kill her. He only left his victim when she cried for help.

33. On July 23, three Polish soldiers forcibly entered the home of the minority German Ewald Banek, of Sypiory in the District of Schubin, and asked for food and drinks. After having received them free of charge, they insulted the members of the family present and set upon them. Banek was badly wounded in the left shoulder and right arm by stabs with a bayonet. At the same time Polish soldiers forced their way into the home of the minority German Arthur Pahlke and tried to rape Frau Pahlke. When Pahlke tried to protect his wife, he was very severely maltreated.

34. On August 6, a gang of young Poles forced the gate of the farm belonging to the seventy-year-old minority German August Mundt of Bialezynek. They injured Mundt in the eye and lower jaw, beat his son Wilhelm with sticks and stones till he fell to the ground unconscious, and also maltreated the rural laborer Karl Jesser, who is in Mundt's employ.

35. On August 9, policemen entered the Christian Hospice in Kattowitz where a meeting of the German People's League was just being held. The armed police set upon the eighteen minority Germans present with rubber truncheons and the butt-ends of their rifles and dragged them to the police station. During the night they were questioned as to what had happened at the meeting, and subjected to such severe maltreatment that, when they were released in the morning, they were covered with red and blue bruises and welts. One minority German had his arm badly wrenched, another had become temporarily deaf in consequence of blows on the head.

36. On August 14, the minority German Thomalla of Karwin was arrested, the reason being unfounded calumnies. During his two days' detention he received neither food nor water. At his examination he was severely beaten and knocked unconscious with fists and bludgeons so that he was mentally deranged when he was released on August 16.

37. In the middle of August, innumerable minority Germans were arrested on the pretext of their having committed high treason. The minority German Rudolf Wilsch of Laurahütte, District Leader of the Young German Party, was arrested and during his examination beaten

till he collapsed completely. After this grave maltreatment he was forced by threats of quartering or of similar torture to plead guilty to the unjust accusation brought against him.

38. Jaeger, a German national, Grant, a minority German, Fräulein Kiesewetter, and Fräulein Neudam, as well as other German nationals and members of the German minority, were grossly maltreated in Polish prisons in order to extort confessions from them. Caustic liquids, for instance, were injected into their genitals, they had ribs broken and were tortured by applications of electric current. After a long stay in hot rooms they were given salt water as a beverage. The minority German Schienemann, still resident in Sieradz, has had his health completely ruined, and during the inquisition lost nearly all his teeth.

No. 416 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, August 23, 1939

According to a statement made by the German Ministry for Home Affairs, about 70,000 refugees belonging to the German minority in Poland have been given shelter in refugee clearing camps up to last August 21. Of these, about 45,000 came from Polish Upper Silesia, and the old Olsa territory. Neither refugees who moved into the Danzig territory nor those who have been able to find shelter with relatives or friends in Germany without passing through a refugee camp, are included in the above figures.

Bergmann

No. 417 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, August 28, 1939

Today I received the following report from a trustworthy source in Usdau:

A week ago a Polish demonstration having as its slogan "Harvest festival with drawn swords," was to take place at Usdau; the attendance, however, was extremely disappointing as the German population refused to take part.

Last Sunday the Poles thought the time was ripe to take vengeance on the German population. Under the pretext of conforming with the measures for evacuation, the greater part of the German minority was driven together like cattle and, as there were no vehicles available for their transport, were marched off into the interior of the country. Those who could not keep up the quick pace of the march were driven forward by blows with the butt-ends of rifles.

A woman who was with child and could not march on was so badly beaten by the guards that she had a miscarriage as a result of which she died.

Another woman had to take with her her little daughter, who was only four years old. Several blows with the butt-end of a rifle which both mother and child received, gave the child a severe wound on the head rendering her absolutely unable to walk any further. The mother then attempted to carry the child, but she was so much impeded that she could not keep up with the extremely quick pace of the march. The leader, therefore, uttering unrepeatable insults, simply snatched the child from her mother and slew it. To his accomplices he justified his action by saying: "This brat would otherwise only give birth some day to more German swine."

These minority Germans have probably been taken into one of the numerous concentration camps.

von Küchler

No. 418 The German Consul-General at Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, May 11, 1939

After Polish aircraft, including military planes, some time ago had repeatedly flown without permission over Danzig territory, a new frontier incident has occurred. On the 10th inst., two officials of the Danzig Political Police were shot at by Polish soldiers from a pillar of the Polish bridge-head at Liessau, when they were on Danzig territory approximately 55 yards from the Polish frontier. The officials were not injured.

The Senate of the Free City of Danzig has entered a protest with the Polish Diplomatic Mission here against this violation of Danzig territory.

von Janson

No. 419 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Thorn, May 15, 1939

I have received the following information from a reliable source:

I. On April 27th, infantry detachments in civilian clothes were taken from Graudenz to the Westerplatte in closed trucks.*

II. On May 12th, about seventy workmen belonging to a Graudenz firm were sent to Danzig in order to provoke incidents. They were sworn in some months ago, at the recruiting office.

III. On May 11th and 12th, the gendarmerie battalions were moved with their kit and baggage-train from Graudenz to Dirschau.

IV. At Neuenburg, several classes were called up for service with the frontier guards; among them were members of the German minority.

V. On May 11th and 12th, privately owned trucks with their drivers were requisitioned in Thorn and the vicinity. Fuel had to be provided for 50 to 250 miles. They were ordered to proceed empty to Dirschau.

* As regards Poland's military preparations on the Westerplatte cf. the Appendix to this Section, p. 442.

VI. On May 13th and 14th, all officials in Thorn were ordered to stand by.

VII. On May 13th, members of the cavalry school and officers of the garrison at Graudenz who were on furlough were recalled.

VIII. It is rumored that volunteers, who are to be employed against Danzig are being recruited by the Reserve Officers', Non-commissioned Officers' and Insurgents' Associations.

Küchler

No. 420 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, May 22, 1939

According to statements made by Herr Greiser, President of the Danzig Senate, which were based on the result of police investigations, the Danzig-Polish incident at Kalthof on the night of May 20-21 happened in the following manner:

a) On the evening of May 20 a considerable number of the inhabitants of Kalthof gathered in front of the house of the Polish customs inspectors in order to demonstrate against the continual molestation of German women and girls by Polish customs inspectors. For about two hours they demanded in chorus the removal of the customs inspectors. In the course of these demonstrations some window-panes of the house in which the customs inspectors live were smashed. There were no further excesses, as the local police interfered and the customs inspectors were able to leave their premises by way of the garden and pass through the crowd on a motor-cycle without being molested.

b) Although complete calm had, meantime, been restored in Kalthof, M. Perkowski, Councillor of Legation and Deputy Head of the Polish Diplomatic Mission in Danzig, notified the Danzig Senate some hours later that he intended to drive to Kalthof in order to investigate the situation on the spot, and asked to be provided with a police escort. This request was twice refused by the Danzig authorities because a journey to Kalthof was no longer necessary and because it was, moreover, the business of the Danzig authorities themselves to make official investigations within the territory of the Free City. In spite of this, M. Perkowski went to Kalthof in a car belonging to the Polish Diplomatic Mission. He was accompanied by Dr. Sziller, of the Head Office of the Polish Rail-

ways Administration in Danzig, an exterritorial member of the Polish Diplomatic Mission, a Polish Chief Customs Inspector, and Murawski, the driver of the car. When M. Perkowski and his companions arrived at Kalthof at about midnight they were not molested in any way. The crowd of demonstrators had long since dispersed.

c) At about 12:50 a. m. a Danzig citizen, a butcher by the name of Gruebnau, was returning from Marienburg to Danzig via Kalthof in a taxi, in which, apart from the driver, Hops, there were two more civilians. When the taxi was about to turn the bend at the over-bridged road near Kalthof the taxi-driver was so dazzled by the headlights of the car of the Polish Diplomatic Mission in Danzig (car number B 61/306) which was standing at the railway embankment that he was forced to stop. Apparently the glare was intensified by means of a bull's eye lantern. Gruebnau and Hops got out of the taxi and went towards the Polish car in order to have its headlights switched off, but immediately afterwards decided to return to their own car. Before reaching it Gruebnau was shot dead by two bullets which, coming from the direction of the Polish car, hit him in the back of the neck and in the shoulder. Being blinded by the headlights of the Polish car neither Hops, the driver, nor the two other passengers in the taxi were able to ascertain who was in the Polish car or who had fired the two shots. The Polish Diplomatic Mission in Danzig asserts that the shots were fired by the driver Murawski, and that M. Perkowski, Dr. Sziller, and the Polish Chief Customs Inspector were then no longer in the official car, but at Kalthof railway-station. Murawski, it is asserted, being threatened by two men in civilian clothes and riding boots, had fired two shots into the air to scare them away and aimed two shots at his alleged assailant only when one of the two men drew his pistol.

The former occupants of the official car of the Polish Diplomatic Mission did not return to it, but left Kalthof station for Dirschau (Poland), according to the Danzig version, on an engine, and according to the Polish version, on a trolley.

In the car, which was left standing, were found a loaded pistol, which had not been fired, and the empty holster of a Mauser pistol. According to a police statement the fatal shots were undoubtedly fired from a Polish army pistol.

The Polish assertion that the driver, Murawski, had been threatened is false. Hops, the taxi-driver, and Gruebnau, the butcher, were unarmed. Gruebnau was still smoking his pipe when approaching the Polish car. Moreover, neither of them knew anything of the previous demonstration at Kalthof, nor of the presence

at Kalthof of members of the Polish Diplomatic Mission in an official car.

d) The report by the Strassbourg Broadcasting Station that Gruebnau had, on several previous occasions, been involved in outrages against Polish customs inspectors in Danzig is not true. Gruebnau was a quiet man and never took part in such demonstrations.

Bergmann

No. 421 The German Consul-General at Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, May 24, 1939

The two Polish notes of the 21st inst.* have been answered today by two communications addressed by the President of the Senate to the Polish Diplomatic Mission.

The Danzig notes state that the Polish driver, Murawski, shot the Danzig citizen, Gruebnau, without any reason and without having been either attacked or threatened. It is pointed out that the three high Polish officials, i. e. M. Perkowski, Councillor of Legation and Deputy to Minister Kudacki, the Chief Inspector of Customs Swida, and the Polish Councillor, Dr. Sziller, had made themselves accessaries after the fact by leaving one of their army pistols in Murawski's hands, and that, moreover, they had made themselves guilty of abetting Murawski, the culprit, by taking him into Polish territory. In consideration of these facts the Senate demand the removal of the three officials mentioned; finally, they reject the statements and demands made in the second Polish note of the 21st inst.**

On the evening of the 22nd inst. the murder at Kalthof led to a big protest demonstration at Tiegenhof where Herr Andres, *Landrat* and *Kreisleiter,* made a speech. In it he requested every single Danzig citizen to remain quiet, cool and disciplined, and declared that Danzig, having complete confidence in the Fuehrer, could, in spite of all provocation, afford to bide its time.

This afternoon a memorial service to be held in honor of Gruebnau, the murdered man, will be attended by leading representatives of the

* These notes deal with the incident at Kalthof.

** In this note the Polish Government had stated that they would not tolerate any restriction of Polish customs rights by "faits accomplis," and had further demanded an investigation into the "attack," compensation for damages for the Polish customs inspectors at Kalthof as well as a "clear and binding statement" by the Senate as to the guarantees to be given for the safety of the "Polish section of the population" and Polish officials in Danzig.

Party and the State. The funeral oration will be made by Herr Greiser, President of the Senate. The interment of Gruebnau's body will take place in Marienburg.

von Janson

No. 422 Protocol Drawn Up at the Head Customs Office in Elbing

(Translation)

Elbing, May 24, 1939

One Otto Eggert, a truck driver of the firm of A. Zedler of Elbing, born on December 12, 1902, in Elbing, residing at 18 Paulikirchstrasse, Elbing, appeared at the Head Customs Office and made the following statement:

At about 10:30 p. m. on May 23, 1939, I arrived at Liessau with the long-distance truck belonging to the firm of A. Zedler of Elbing, on a trip taking me into German territory.

In order to comply with the customs formalities, I stopped the truck in front of the transformer station opposite the Danzig customs shed.

When the Polish customs official came to the truck to examine the lead seals, etc., I was about to walk to the Polish customs office at the bridge-head, as I had always done, in order to declare the truck as destined for through traffic.

When I was only a short distance from the second iron fence in front of the bridge-head, I heard the Polish sentry standing on the upper projection of the bridge-head shout something to another sentry standing near the railway line.

The sentry standing below shouted an answer which I did not understand and at once pointed his rifle at me. When I saw this I at once threw myself on the ground. No sooner had I done so than the first shot, which must have passed just over my head, rang out.

I rolled on my side, then jumped up and ran forward in the direction of the Danzig customs shed and again threw myself on the ground. At the same moment a second shot was fired, again passing over me and embedded itself in the wall of the transformer station.

I then ran back and took cover behind the Danzig customs shed.

After this incident the Polish customs official standing near the lorry went to the bridge-head and asked the sentry why he had fired.

He then returned, saying that it had been a mistake and that I should go to the Polish officer at the bridge-head in order to talk it over with him. However, I declined to set foot upon Polish territory.

Signed:

Otto Eggert

Witnessed:

Klär
Customs Inspector

No. 423 The German Consul-General at Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, June 5, 1939

The number of Polish customs officials working on Danzig territory has lately been considerably increased. It is a well-known fact that there have been repeated incidents between the Danzig population and the Polish customs officials, who, in their official activities, often exceed the duties assigned to them in accordance with existing treaties. The Senate of the Free City of Danzig therefore took the opportunity to broach, as a matter of principle, the question of Polish customs inspectors in Danzig in the note of the 3rd inst., a copy of which is enclosed, and to request the Polish Diplomatic Mission to restrict the activities of Polish customs inspectors to general supervision in conformity with treaty provisions and to see to it that in future Polish customs inspectors refrain from issuing instructions to Danzig customs officials.

In the same note the Senate stated their intention of administering the oath to all Danzig customs officials on the basis of the new Danzig Civil Servants Act. The administration of this oath had been temporarily postponed. As will be remembered, the Polish Diplomatic Mission here raised objections to the New Danzig Civil Servants Act with particular reference to the position of Danzig customs officials, which objections were contested by the Senate in their note of last January 3.

von Janson

Enclosure

The President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig to the Diplomatic Representative of the Polish Republic

(Translation)

Danzig, June 3, 1939

Sir:

Several months ago I had the honor of drawing your attention to the fact that the ever-increasing number of Polish customs inspectors is not compatible with the execution of their prescribed duties. Since the latest additions, there are now well over one hundred Polish customs inspectors in the Danzig territory. Their behavior, both in their official capacity and in their private life, has frequently given rise to complaints. The Danzig population, like the German population, feel themselves constantly offended in their local frontier intercourse by the way in which the Polish customs officials perform their duty and by their behavior in private life.

I have no fear that incidents on the part of the population might arise on that account. Still less is the safety of the Polish officials in any way endangered. I have taken steps to ensure that they may, as hitherto, perform their duties in absolute safety and without hindrance. I believe, however, that ways and means must be found to eliminate the constant friction and tension.

For all these reasons I consider it necessary forthwith to restrict the activity of the Polish customs inspectors to a general supervision in conformity with the agreement. In particular, I must urge that their official activities be confined to the offices, and not performed outside of them. I can also no longer permit the Danzig customs officials to take instructions, even in the form of suggestions, from the Polish customs officials. I shall see to it that questions asked in an official capacity will be answered officially.

I have directed the President of the Head Customs Office of the Free City of Danzig to instruct his officials accordingly. I have the honor, Sir, to request you to inform your Government accordingly and to exert your influence towards meeting the wishes of the Danzig Government.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to revert to our conversation of last February 8. At that time I explained to you, Sir, that I would give instructions to abstain for the present from swearing in the customs officials, and that, should the occasion arise, I would communicate with you before administering the oath.

I have the honor to inform you, with reference to the contents of my letter of last January 3 (pp. 2 and 3), that I have now left it to the dis-

cretion of the Finance Department of the Senate to administer the oath to the customs officials if they should consider it desirable.

I have, etc.

Greiser

No. 424 The German Consul-General at Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, June 9, 1939

A short time ago an incident occurred here which sheds significant light upon the activities of Polish customs inspectors in Danzig.

On the afternoon of last May 25, two Polish customs inspectors, Kalinowski and Jarostowski, of Tiegenhof, went by motor-cycle to the ferry near Nickelswalde, crossed over to Schiewenhorst by ferry and tried to gain information with regard to the bridge there. They took measurements by pacing the distances, descended the stone steps leading down to the water, tested the foundations of the bridge by knocking, and examined an iron waste-pipe. They then recrossed to Nickelswalde by ferry, went back to their motor-cycle, which they had left standing there, and made notes on paper.

In their issues of the 7th inst., No. 130, the two Danzig daily papers, *Der Danziger Vorposten* and the *Danziger Neueste Nachrichten,* publish a report of this incident, which can only be described as obvious espionage on the part of Polish customs inspectors, pointing out that the incident proved unmistakably that the real function of the Polish customs inspectors in Danzig was totally unconnected with their duties as customs officials.

The number of Polish customs inspectors has, moreover, been increased by the appointment of thirty-one additional officials following the incident at Kalthof.

For the Consul-General

von Grolman

No. 425 The German Consul-General at Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, June 12, 1939

In the matter of the customs inspectors, the Polish Diplomatic Mission here replied to the Danzig note of the 3rd inst., which I submitted with my preliminary report,* by a note dated June 10.

* Cf. No. 423 and appendix.

The Polish note rejects the reproaches made against the behavior of the Polish customs inspectors, designates the present number of the Polish customs inspectors doing duty in Danzig as still insufficient, and states that no restrictions of the rights of the Polish customs inspectors could be admitted. As to the question of swearing in the Danzig customs officials, the Polish note states that, in case this were done, the Polish Government would have to consider an increase in the number of customs inspectors, for the Danzig customs officials, so the note continues, "would then constitute a lesser guarantee for the observance and proper application of the Polish customs regulations than hitherto."

As I was informed by the Senate, the number of Polish customs inspectors on Danzig territory at present totals 106, including an increase of 31 officials effected after the incident at Kalthof, whereas only two Polish officials have been withdrawn.

von Janson

No. 426 The German Consul-General at Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, June 12, 1939

During the night between the 9th and 10th inst. a fresh incident occurred in connection with a Polish customs inspector. Under the pretext of being a lieutenant in the German Reserve, von Lipinski, a Polish customs inspector, approached two Danzig S. A. men and tried to sound them out on official matters connected with the S. A. Afterwards he took them round in a car and even intended to take them to Gdynia, having ordered the driver not to stop at the frontier. This intended trip to Gdynia did not materialize, as, in the meantime, von Lipinski abused both the Fuehrer and Dr. Goebbels in an unheard-of manner, in consequence of which they came to blows, von Lipinski being rather badly injured in the fray.

On account of this incident, and also on account of the espionage of the two Polish customs inspectors Kalinowski and Jarostowski at the Schiewenhorst ferry, already mentioned in my preliminary report,* the Senate of the Free City of Danzig have lodged a strongly-worded protest today with the Polish Diplomatic Mission.

von Janson

* Cf. No. 424.

No. 427 The German Consul-General at Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, June 23, 1939

Last Sunday, the 18th inst., the Polish Professional and Workingmen's Association arranged an excursion to Dirschau, in which about 1,600 persons took part.

The fact that Poles living in Danzig now as formerly find it possible to participate in such excursions to Polish territory, forms a remarkable contrast to Polish administrative chicanery as applied to minority Germans in Poland, who, among other things, have been forbidden to take part in the great Vistula Singing Festival, which begins today in Danzig, as well as in the International Rowing Regatta in Danzig on the 25th inst.

For the Consul-General

von Grolman

No. 428 The German Consul-General at Danzig to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Danzig, June 23, 1939

The Danzig Police Force at Liessau received information that on June 22 a formation sub-divided into groups of 10 men each, to be led by persons who have been previously convicted and whose names are known, was formed in Dirschau by a Polish officer, the intention being that this formation should enter Danzig in civilian clothes with gas bombs during the next few days; also that instructions had been issued in Dirschau to be ready for a possible emergency between June 22 and 24. It is said that two generals from Warsaw are expected there on June 23, and that airplanes have also arrived in the neighborhood of Dirschau.

Grolman

No. 429 The German Consul-General at Danzig to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Danzig, July 7, 1939

In addition to the fact that recently various consignments of old potatoes have not been exported from Poland to Danzig, a case has now arisen

in which a consignment already on its way has not been allowed to cross the frontier to Danzig. On the 6th inst., two trucks with a load of 5½ tons of potatoes, bought in the district of Karthaus by a Danzig firm, were held up at the Danzig-Polish frontier station near Kokoschken. In this connection one of the Polish frontier guards said something to the effect that they did not allow the potatoes to pass, as they were destined only for the German soldiers in Danzig. At the request of the Danzig consignee, the Senate then got into touch with the Polish Diplomatic Mission here, which at first promised to release the detained trucks, but announced about two hours later that they could not "for certain other reasons" release the consignment.

This procedure on the part of the Poles is at variance with the provisions of the Warsaw Agreement of October 24, 1921, Article 215 of which states that there should be no restrictions in the exchange of goods between Poland and Danzig. It constitutes, moreover, a violation of the special Danzig-Polish agreement as to the exchange of agricultural produce, in which Poland pledged herself to supply Danzig with definite quantities of such produce.

There can be no doubt that there are political reasons underlying the Polish measures.

von Janson

No. 430 The German Consul-General at Thorn to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Thorn, July 11, 1939

The annual "Festival of the Sea" was held from June 25 to July 2 last. The Marine and Colonial League published a proclamation in the local press, in which, as in the opening address by General Kwasniewsky, Chairman of the Sea and Colonial League, demands were made for the defense of the Polish seaboard and for an increase of the Polish Navy.

In connection with these festivities, which were held in all the larger towns in Pommerellen and were well attended by the population, a more far-reaching demand for the continued expansion of the Polish seaboard was made on more than one occasion. This demand was taken up by a certain section of the local press.

The climax of this year's festivities was reached in a demonstration at Gdynia on last June 29, in which Deputy-Premier Kwiatkawski, M. Roman, Minister for Trade and Commerce, and Minister Raczkiewicz, Voivode of Pommerellen, took part. According to a report by the German Consulate at Gdynia this demonstration was attended by some three

thousand Poles from Danzig, who carried with them placards bearing the inscriptions, "The heart of Danzig and the heart of Poland are one," and "Danzig is Polish and will remain Polish." In an address, M. Budzynski, the representative of the Polish minority in the Danzig Diet, referred to the alleged persecution of the Polish minority in Danzig, and declared that the Polish population of Danzig would achieve the union of Danzig with the Polish mother-country with the aid of the Polish army.

For the Consul-General

Graf

No. 431 The President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig to the Diplomatic Representative of the Polish Republic

(Translation)

Danzig, July 29, 1939

Sir:

In your letter of the 19th inst. you informed me that the Polish Government had decided "to discontinue from August 1 next the supervision carried out by the Polish customs inspectors on the premises of the firm of Amada-Unida in Danzig, and not to recognize the certificates made out for the refining trade by the Danzig Customs Office for the export of consignments of fat by this firm to Poland."

If the Government of the Polish Republic do not want to avail themselves of the right of supervision on the premises of the above firm, it is not our concern. If, on the other hand, the certificates made out by the Danzig Head Customs Office be no longer recognized prior to the expiration of the basic Agreement of May 22, 1937, this would constitute an *action directe* and a violation of the Agreement of May 22, 1937, which, unless previously rescinded, will remain in force until July 31, 1940.

I have the honor of informing you that I feel compelled to enter a protest against such action and also against the confusion of this purely economic matter with the question of the activity of Polish customs inspectors. I include in this protest the confusion, already mentioned in verbal negotiations, in connection with the question of the Polish customs inspectors and the export to Poland of herrings caught by Danzig fishermen. As already explained in the Senate's *Aide-Mémoire* of the 18th inst., such an embargo on imports is not compatible with the principle of a common area, and likewise constitutes an *action directe.*

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity of pointing out that if the certificates made out by the Danzig Head Customs Office for the export of consignments of fat to Poland by the firm of Amada-Unida

should in fact no longer be recognized, and if the embargo on the export of herrings caught by Danzig fishermen to Poland should not be revoked, the Senate would feel compelled to reply at once by economic countermeasures.

I am, etc.

Greiser

No. 432 The Diplomatic Representative of the Polish Republic to the President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig

(Translation)

To the President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig,
Mr. Arthur Greiser

Danzig, August 4, 1939

I learn that the local Danzig customs officials posted on the frontier between the Free City of Danzig and East Prussia have declared, in an unprecedented statement to the Polish customs officials, that the Danzig executives intend, from 7 o'clock a. m. on August 6 onwards, to oppose a certain number of Polish inspectors in the exercise of their normal duties, which functions are a part of the prerogatives of the Polish Government on the customs frontier. I am convinced that this act on the part of the local authorities depends either on a misunderstanding or on an erroneous interpretation of the instructions of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig.

I am fully convinced that you, Mr. President of the Senate, can have no doubt that this infringement of the fundamental rights of Poland will on no pretext whatever be tolerated by the Polish Government.

I await your answer by August 5 at 6 p. m. at the latest, with the assurance that you have given instructions cancelling the action of your subordinates.

In view of the fact that the above-mentioned action is one of a series which have taken place on the frontier, I am forced to warn you, Mr. President of the Senate, that all Polish customs inspectors have received the order to appear for duty in uniform and bearing arms, on August 6 of the current year and on subsequent days, at every point on the frontier which they consider necessary for examination of the customs. Every attempt made to hinder them in the exercise of their duties, every attack or intervention on the part of the police will be regarded by the Polish Government as an act of violence against the officials of the Polish State in the pursuance of their duties.

If the above-mentioned illegal actions should take place, the Polish Government will take retaliatory measures without delay against the

Free City, as the responsibility for them will rest entirely on the Senate of the Free City.

I hope to receive a satisfactory explanation before the above-mentioned date.

Chodacki

No. 433 The Diplomatic Representative of the Polish Republic to the President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig

(Translation)

Danzig, August 4, 1939

Mr. President of the Senate:

The Polish Government beg to express their astonishment at the fact that the Senate should find technical difficulties in replying to so simple a matter. In the interest of avoiding threatening consequences, I note for the time being that no act of violence will be undertaken against our customs inspectors and that they will be able to proceed in a normal way with their duties. I must repeat nevertheless that the admonitions contained in my note of August 4, 11:30 p. m., remain in force.

I have, etc.

Chodacki

No. 434 The President of the Senate of the Free City of Danzig to the Diplomatic Representative of the Polish Republic

(Translation)

Danzig, August 7, 1939

Sir:

In reply to your two notes dated the 4th of this month, the second of which I received on August 5th, I must express my astonishment to you that you should make a completely unverified rumor a pretext for sending the Danzig Government a short-term ultimatum from the Polish Government, and thus in this time of political unrest conjure up unfounded danger which may result in inconceivable disaster. The sudden decree of the Polish Government that *all* Polish customs officials on duty are to appear in uniform and bearing arms, is a breach of the arrangement agreed upon, and can be understood only as an intentional provocation to bring about incidents and acts of violence of the most dangerous nature.

According to facts which I have since ascertained, and concerning which I immediately telephoned to you on Saturday morning, the 5th inst., no order announcing that the Danzig executives from August 6th at 7 a. m. onwards are to oppose a certain number of Polish inspectors in the exercise of their normal duties has been issued from an office, certainly not from any administrative quarter of the Customs Office of the Free City of Danzig.

I refer you further to my note of June 3rd of this year,* in which I already carefully defined the relationship of the Danzig customs officials and the Polish customs inspectors on the frontier.

The Danzig Government protest with great energy against the threatened retaliations of the Polish Government which they regard as an absolutely inadmissible threat and the consequences of which will devolve on the Polish Government alone.

I have, etc. . . . . .

Greiser

No. 435 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, August 23, 1939

Vice-Consul von Grolman, of the German Consulate-General in Danzig, has just telephoned the following message:

At about 2:25 p. m., a German passenger plane was fired at by Poles in the neighborhood of Heisternest on the Hela Peninsula while on its regular flight from Berlin via Danzig to Königsberg. The machine was about six nautical miles away from the coast flying at an altitude of approximately 160 feet. The shells exploded at a distance of approximately 160 feet to the side and in front of the plane. It was only by chance that the plane was not hit.

(Since last night German passenger planes, acting on instructions, no longer follow the route via the prescribed zones across the Polish Corridor, but must make a detour over the Baltic.)

Bergmann

No. 436 Memorandum of an Official in the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, August 24, 1939

Apart from the shelling of the *Luft Hansa* plane D-APUP off Hela

* Cf. No. 423, Enclosure.

which we reported yesterday,* two further reports regarding the shelling of aircraft have been received:

1. At about 1:15 p.m. the aeroplane D-APUP, Savoia type, piloted by Böhner, when making the trip from Danzig to Berlin was shot at by anti-aircraft guns on Hela and also aboard a Polish cruiser lying at a distance of 25 miles off the coast. The aeroplane was approximately 10 to 12 miles off the Hela Peninsula flying at an altitude of 4,875 feet. Eight shell explosions were observed at a considerable distance from the machine.

2. At 4 p. m. the aeroplane D-AMYO, of the Ju 86 type, piloted by Neumann, was fired at from the Hela Peninsula while on its course from Danzig to Berlin. Distance from the coast 5 to 6 nautical miles, altitude approximately 3,900 feet. The range was too short and too low.

Schultz-Sponholz

No. 437 The German Consul-General at Danzig to the Foreign Office

Information received by telephone at 12:40 a. m., August 31, 1939

(Translation)

At about 10:30 p. m. on August 30, 1939, the Poles fired a number of shots over Danzig territory on the Danzig frontier near Steinfleiss, north of Zoppot.

It has not been possible so far to ascertain whether these shots have injured any persons or caused any material damage.

More detailed information will follow this morning.

Appendix

The High Command of the German Armed Forces to the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, November 3, 1939

An investigation of the military condition of the Westerplatte and of the former Polish buildings in Danzig which was carried out after the conclusion of military operations in Danzig, has yielded the following results:

* Cf. No. 435.

1. The Polish garrison on the Westerplatte numbered roughly 240 men.*

As regards fortifications** on the Westerplatte, apart from an old German open gun emplacement dating from 1911, in which three or four machine-guns with at least 10,000 rounds of ammunition were found, there were 5 concrete bunkers for machine-guns which had obviously been prepared beforehand by the Poles and built according to a well-planned system of reciprocal flanking. Moreover, the new barracks had been built so as to allow of easy defense on all sides, and the basement as well as the cellars in the so-called non-commissioned officers' quarters had been built of concrete and equipped for defense. Finally there were found among other things: one 7.5-centimetre gun and two anti-tank guns as well as a number of pill-boxes, palisades, and gunners' pits, ready for immediate action.

2. The following were the Polish bases within the precincts of Danzig:

    1. Polish Post Office, Heveliusplatz.
    2. Main Railway Station and Polish Railway Station Post Office.
    3. Head Office of the Polish Railways.
    4. Polish Diplomatic Mission, Neugarten.
    5. Polish Customs Inspection Offices, Opitzstrasse.
    6. Polish Boy Scouts' Home, Jahnstrasse.
    7. Polish residential flats, Neufahrwasser, Hindoriusstrasse.
    8. Polish Students' Residence, Langfuhr.
    9. Polish Secondary School.

Among other things the following war material was found and secured when the buildings were occupied:

1. In the Polish Post Office, three light machine-guns, 44 filled and 13 empty frames for light machine-guns, 30 army pistols, 1 revolver, 1 bag of infantry and pistol ammunition, 150 egg hand-grenades, 2 infernal machines, small arms taken from 38 prisoners.
2. In the Main Railway Station, 1 light machine-gun and small arms.

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* According to the resolution of December 9, 1925, the Council of the League of Nations granted Poland the right to keep a military guard of 2 officers, 20 non-commissioned officers and 66 men on the Westerplatte (cf. No. 22).

** By virtue of the resolution of the Council of the League of Nations of March 14, 1924, referred to in § 2 of the Provisional Agreement of August 4, 1928, between Danzig and Poland regarding the Westerplatte, the latter was placed at the disposal of the Polish Government exclusively, for the storage of war material. Apart from this, the sovereignty of Danzig over this territory remained unimpaired, a fact also recognized by the Polish Government (cf. the legal opinion of the jurists, Sir Cecil Hurst and Signor Pilotti, submitted to the Council of the League of Nations on December 8, 1927, by the Rapporteur of the Council. League of Nations, Official Journal 1928, pp. 161—162).

3. In the Railway Station Post Office, 1 machine-gun, 18 pistols, 4 rifles with ammunition, 2 boxes of hand-grenades.
4. In the head Office of the Polish Railways, 45 pistols, 2,600 rounds of ammunition.
5. In the Polish Diplomatic Mission, Neugarten, 1 light machine-gun, 5 rifles, 4 pistols and ammunition.
6. In the Polish Customs Inspection Office, Opitzstrasse, 15 rifles and 1,000 rounds of ammunition.
7. In the Polish Boy Scouts' Home, 1 machine-gun with ammunition, and 20 rubber truncheons.

In all other bases, stores were found consisting partly of rifles, partly of pistols and ammunition.

The Chief of the High Command of the German Armed Forces.

By Order

Bürkner

B. The Last Phase of the German-Polish Crisis

No. 438 Statement Made by Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons, July 10, 1939

I have previously stated that His Majesty's Government are maintaining close contact with the Polish and French Governments on the question of Danzig. I have nothing at present to add to the information which has already been given to the House about the local situation. But I may, perhaps, usefully review the elements of this question as they appear to His Majesty's Government.

Racially Danzig is, almost wholly, a German city; but the prosperity of its inhabitants depends to a very large extent upon Polish trade. The Vistula is Poland's only waterway to the Baltic, and the port at its mouth is therefore of vital strategic and economic importance to her. Another Power established in Danzig could, if it so desired, block Poland's access to the sea and so exert an economic and military stranglehold upon her. Those who were responsible for framing the present statute of the Free City were fully conscious of these facts, and did their best to make provision accordingly. Moreover, there is no question of any oppression of the German population in Danzig. On the contrary, the administration of the Free City is in German hands, and the only restrictions imposed upon it are not of a kind to curtail the liberties of its citizens. The present settlement, though it may be capable of improvement, cannot in itself be regarded as basically unjust or illogical. The maintenance of the *status quo* had in fact been guaranteed by the German Chancellor himself up to 1944 by the ten-year Treaty which he had concluded with Marshal Pilsudski.

Up till last March Germany seems to have felt that, while the position of Danzig might ultimately require revision, the question was neither urgent nor likely to lead to a serious dispute. But in March, when the German Government put forward an offer in the form of certain desiderata accompanied by a press campaign, the Polish Government realized that they might presently be faced with a unilateral solution, which they would have to resist with all their forces. They had before them the events which had taken place in Austria, Czechoslovakia and the Memelland. Accordingly, they refused to accept the German point of view, and themselves made suggestions for a possible solution of the problems in which Germany was interested. Certain defensive measures were taken by Poland on the 23rd of March and the reply was sent to Berlin on the 26th of March. I ask the House to note carefully these dates. It has been freely stated in Germany that it was His Majesty's Government's guarantee which encouraged the Polish Government to take the action which I

have described. But it will be observed that our guarantee was not given until the 31st of March. By the 26th of March no mention of it, even, had been made to the Polish Government.

Recent occurrences in Danzig have inevitably given rise to fears that it is intended to settle her future status by unilateral action, organized by surreptitious methods, thus presenting Poland and other Powers with a *fait accompli*. In such circumstances any action taken by Poland to restore the situation would, it is suggested, be represented as an act of aggression on her part, and if her action were supported by other Powers they would be accused of aiding and abetting her in the use of force.

If the sequence of events should, in fact, be such as is contemplated on this hypothesis, Hon. Members will realize, from what I have said earlier, that the issue could not be considered as a purely local matter involving the rights and liberties of the Danzigers, which incidentally are in no way threatened, but would at once raise graver issues affecting Polish national existence and independence. We have guaranteed to give our assistance to Poland in the case of a clear threat to her independence, which she considers it vital to resist with her national forces, and we are firmly resolved to carry out this undertaking.

I have said that while the present settlement is neither basically unjust nor illogical, it may be capable of improvement. It may be that in a clearer atmosphere possible improvements could be discussed. Indeed, Colonel Beck has himself said in his speech on the 5th of May that if the Government of the Reich is guided by two conditions, namely, peaceful intentions and peaceful methods of procedure, all conversations are possible. In his speech before the Reichstag on the 28th of April the German Chancellor said that if the Polish Government wished to come to fresh contractual arrangements governing its relations with Germany he could but welcome such an idea. He added that any such future arrangements would have to be based on an absolutely clear obligation equally binding on both parties.

His Majesty's Government realize that recent developments in the Free City have disturbed confidence and rendered it difficult at present to find an atmosphere in which reasonable counsels can prevail. In face of this situation, the Polish Government have remained calm, and His Majesty's Government hope that the Free City, with her ancient traditions, may again prove, as she has done before in her history, that different nationalities can work together when their real interests coincide. Meanwhile, I trust that all concerned will declare and show their determination not to allow any incidents in connection with Danzig to assume such a character as might constitute a menace to the peace of Europe.

No. 439 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, July 13, 1939

During a conversation with the French Ambassador, who had called on me with regard to another matter, I turned the conversation to the latest speech made by the British Prime Minister.* I told M. Coulondre that to me this speech appeared to be a harmful innovation. Mr. Chamberlain had certainly said in his statement that when a better political atmosphere had been created an agreement might be reached with regard to the German-Polish problem. But he himself was contributing towards making the atmosphere worse and separating the parties still further. He encouraged the Poles to be obstinate and irritable; while, on the other hand, he tried to intimidate us as regards our policy, a procedure which, as everyone knew, had exactly the opposite effect on us. But Mr. Chamberlain's whole political structure was based on an error, since he maintained that Germany had guaranteed the *status quo* in Danzig up to the year 1944. Mr. Chamberlain's collaborators would have been well advised to study the relevant documents before supplying their chief with such inaccurate information.

M. Coulondre then attempted to represent the Polish attitude as moderate. I disputed this, referred him to the Polish comment on Mr. Chamberlain's statement and told him that I agreed with an English newspaper which said a few days ago that it was not secret, but public diplomacy which was to blamé for crises; it might be well for the members of the British Cabinet to imitate their German colleagues and take a holiday for a change.

Weizsäcker

No. 440 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, July 14, 1939

After his short stay in London, the British Ambassador today paid me an official visit, during which the conversation, of course, dwelt primarily upon the general situation. The views expressed on both sides were on the usual lines. The Ambassador did not dispute the fact that Mr. Chamberlain's last statement had brought about a set-back rather than an improvement in the international atmosphere; on the other hand, however, he did not explicitly admit it. He used the argument, often to be heard at present, that in 1914, according to wide-spread opinion, Sir

* Cf. No. 438.

Edward Grey had been guilty of screening himself and the British Government behind a cloud of fog. The present British Government wished to avoid incurring such a reproach. On the other hand, Nevile Henderson understood very well that public statements of this kind merely served to encourage an ally, in this case Poland, in her obstinacy, instead of bringing her to her senses.

At one point in our conversation Henderson mentioned the present calling up of reservists in Germany as being indicative of the situation. To this I replied that it was a fact that in France and Poland the number of men serving with the colors was about half a million above normal strength, whereas the calling up of reservists announced in our newspapers was only part of the routine adopted by every standing army in summer. I added that British foreign policy furthermore appeared to me to be fully preoccupied with preparations for war and with searching for allies wherever possible, though not always with telling success. Henderson further enlarged upon the general situation and concluded his observations by expressing his confidence in the Fuehrer's political genius for solving difficulties and conflicts at the right moment without bloodshed.

Weizsäcker

No. 441 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, July 21, 1939

An interview granted by Marshal Smigly-Rydz to an American woman journalist* confirms the fact that there has been no change in the Polish attitude towards the fundamental questions connected with the Danzig problem. The views expressed by the Marshal, which were directed against the German *Anschluss* plans, and which in their extreme outspokenness almost outdid the speech made by Beck on May 5, have obviously been considered necessary here because of the prevailing impression that the restraint imposed upon the Polish press at the beginning

* Among the remarks made by Marshal Smigly-Rydz in the course of an interview published by the "New Chronicle" on July 17, 1939, with regard to the Danzig problem were the following: "If Germany persists in her plans for 'Anschluss,' Poland will fight, even if she fights alone and without allies. The whole nation is agreed on this. The whole nation to the last man and woman is ready to fight for Poland's independence, for when we say we shall go to war over Danzig we shall be fighting for our independence. Danzig is necessary for Poland. Who controls Danzig controls our economic life. The taking of Danzig by the Germans would be an act which recalls to our minds the partition of Poland. That is why I mobilized four months ago when Herr Hitler again made demands for Danzig and the Corridor. Believe me, that mobilization was no mere demonstration. At that time we were ready to go to war if necessary. Poland's army is not as big as Germany's, but it is a pretty good army. But in case of war every man and every woman of whatever age would be a soldier of Poland."

of the month had in many cases been interpreted abroad as a symptom of weakness. The emphatic reiteration of the fact that Poland would, if necessary, resort to arms on account of Danzig, even without allies, is designed to discourage the theory, so injurious to Polish self-esteem, that Poland's readiness to defend herself was merely the outcome of the British guarantee, and at the same time to make clear to the friendly Powers that there were definite limits to Poland's readiness to negotiate. In this connection, it is an interesting fact that the interview was published on the very day of General Ironside's arrival.

Moltke

No. 442 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, July 22, 1939

The comments on Marshal Smigly-Rydz's interview, which were given last night to the foreign press at the press conference at the Polish Foreign Ministry and then broadcast by Polish broadcasting stations, again stress the special importance which the Poles desire to have attributed to the Marshal's statements. The fact that the Marshal, who has never before granted an interview, has made an appeal to international public opinion, is in itself striking enough and proves to what extent the army, in the person of the Commander-in-Chief, interferes directly with foreign policy. Much of the wording used by the Marshal, as for instance that regarding Poland's relations with Russia, which would scarcely have been used in like fashion by M. Beck, indicate that the interview was obviously not composed at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and perhaps that the wording had not even been agreed upon between the Marshal and that Ministry.

I have already pointed out elsewhere that the utterances of Marshal Smigly-Rydz are partly addressed to the Allies, primarily to England, and that their object is to stress the fact that Poland is not prepared to make any concessions whatever in connection with the Danzig question, even if she has to fight alone, without allies. In the press as well as in the above comments by the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, however, stress is laid primarily upon the importance of the interview for the German public and the German Government, for whom it was intended to constitute the "last word."

von Moltke

No. 443 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, July 22, 1939

General Ironside's visit, I suppose, is chiefly of a demonstrative character. As there was evidently little to be arranged as far as the co-operation of the Polish and British armies is concerned, a fact which is indicated by the absence of an adequate staff of technical experts, Britain apparently wanted, in this respect at any rate, to give a visible indication of her readiness to give military assistance, especially after the plan of a non-stop flight of British aeroplanes had to be abandoned.

The Poles did everything to honor their guest by giving him an especially distinguished reception. It is noticeable that the British General did not carry out the plan, reported in the Polish press, of a two days' visit to the district in which the new armaments industry is situated. Whether it is correct to interpret this as the result of a certain lack of unanimity appears to me doubtful. So much, however, is surely true: that not everything in the British-Polish relations goes as smoothly as they might wish. The interview in which the Polish Marshal, though apparently not quite in accord with M. Beck, interrupted the beginnings of a cerain *détente* on the very day of General Ironside's arrival by once more using a sharp tone, in itself betrays a certain distrust as to Britain's readiness to lend full support to the Polish point of view in the Danzig question. In addition it is said that the result of the British-Polish negotiations for a loan has fallen far short of Polish expectations, and that the resulting dissatisfaction formed an important subject of the Warsaw negotiations with the British General. As I hear, the Poles are said to have succeeded in convincing General Ironside of the necessity of still more considerable increase in Poland's armaments. Doubts as to the result of the Moscow negotiations, and the Polish thesis that the strengthening of the Polish stronghold is more important than the doubtful help of the Russians, seem to have played an important part in this.

Moltke

No. 444 The German Ambassador in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Warsaw, August 1, 1939

The population of Poland has borne the state of partial mobilization and political insecurity, which has now lasted for four months, without any collapse or appreciable deterioration in morale. The old hatred for

everything German, and the conviction that it is the fate of Poland to cross swords with Germany, are too deeply ingrained for passions to subside quickly once they have been inflamed.

If one wants to discover the reason for this unanimous feeling among the Polish people, it is important to realize the special social structure of the Polish population.

The greatest part of the Polish intelligentsia comes from classes which before and during the Great War fought the revolutionary struggle against the so-called Partition Powers. Today this Polish intelligentsia administer the State, their posts as civil servants being their only source of subsistence. They consider themselves the mainstay of Polish nationalism and of the Polish State, and their nationalistic revolutionary tradition has filled them with a national fanaticism which is not easily shaken by hostile propaganda. The great landowners and the upper middle class, though too unimportant in numbers to be reckoned as a special factor, are intimately connected with French culture and therefore do not fall far short of the rest of the intelligentsia in their dislike of Germany.

The great masses of the Polish peasant population are obtuse and ignorant, and the majority are illiterate and easily managed by any government that appeals to them with clear national slogans. Priests and teachers are the instruments by means of which the politically uneducated mass of villagers are governed and influenced. Even the more advanced part of the peasant population is on the anti-German side.

The Polish workmen, who live in very poor social conditions, are mostly Marxians, which is in itself sufficient to make them hostile to National-Socialist Germany. Moreover, their political organization still retains old traditions from the struggle for national liberty, traditions which made it easier for them to join hands with middle class nationalists in their fight against Germany.

A lower middle class of a distinctively Polish character hardly exists in Poland. Its place is taken by a strong Jewish element without national feeling and therefore imbued in exaggerated measure with all the bad qualities of a lower middle class, i. e. an inclination to nervousness and to the spreading of rumors. This Jewish middle class in Poland is, as far as the struggle against Germany is concerned, a natural and fanatical ally of Polish chauvinism.

Special attention must be paid to the activities of the Polish clergy, whose influence is extremely great because of the strong religious feeling prevalent in all classes. As far as their personal influence on the population is concerned, they put themselves the more willingly and unreservedly at the disposal of the Polish anti-German propaganda as their own aims completely coincide with those of the State. They preach to

the nation that Poland is on the verge of waging a holy war against German neo-paganism, and they can hardly be surpassed in their chauvinism. Thus some priests in rural districts are reported already to have held services of intercession for Polish victory and to have declared that they could not pray for peace because they were all for war. A special service of intercession for peace ordered by the Cardinal was often altered by the priests into prayer for a Polish victory.*

The special social structure of the Polish population and the propaganda which has been skilfully adapted to it have brought about in Poland that, even among the masses, the determination to resist continues unbroken. The slogans of the Government's propaganda are taken as gospel truth; wide circles are indeed convinced of the fact that Poland is on the side of the future victors, that people have not enough to eat in Germany, that every day scores of deserters, hungry German soldiers and labor service men, are streaming into Poland, that the German war material is of very doubtful value, that Germany's foreign policy suffers one defeat after another. Polish propaganda has also succeeded in convincing large sections of Polish public opinion that a war over Danzig means a war for Polish independence. Even in the social strata of the intelligentsia who have some experience in foreign countries, and are therefore able to estimate correctly the proportionate strength of Germany and Poland, the spirit of resistance continues unimpaired. Even if, in the course of a war, Poland should be completely occupied by German troops, they are convinced that Poland will finally rise again greater and stronger than ever, thanks to the victory of the Allies. At the moment a certain disposition inherent in the Polish character to stake everything on one card misleads many people to think that Poland should begin war sooner rather than later in order to counteract the wearing effect of the prolonged crisis. To be sure, this optimism is based on the presupposition that the confidence placed in the allies, especially in Britain, remains unshaken. If, in this respect, the failure of the Polish-British negotiations for a loan has undoubtedly created a certain nervousness, Polish propaganda, on the other hand, has done its share to parry the blow. It is better therefore not to exaggerate these occurrences and their consequences.

As the above exposition indicates, the four months of political tension and partial mobilization of the Polish army have so far had no effect on Poland's moral and material powers of resistance. In consideration of the confidence which Poland places in her allies and which British propaganda nourishes with particular care, a fundamental change in Poland's attitude cannot be expected in the near future.

von Moltke

* Cf. also No. 392.

No. 445 Communication from the State Secretary at the Foreign Office to the Polish Chargé d'Affaires, August 9, 1939

(Translation)

The Reich Government have been greatly astonished to receive information of the note of the Polish Government to the Senate of the Free City of Danzig, in which a demand was made in the form of an ultimatum to revoke an alleged decree intended to hinder the Polish customs inspectors in the exercise of their normal duties (which decree, however, was based on unfounded rumors, and in reality had never been issued by the Senate of the Free City of Danzig). In case of a refusal, the Free City of Danzig was threatened with retaliatory measures.*

The Reich Government see themselves obliged to point out to the Polish Government that the repetition of such a demand, in the form of an ultimatum, to the Free City of Danzig and the threat of retaliatory measures would lead to greater tension in the relationship between Germany and Poland, and that the responsibility of such consequences would devolve exclusively on the Polish Government, for the German Government herewith repudiates in advance all responsibility for them.

The German Government further draw the attention of the Polish Government to the fact that the measures taken by the Polish Government to prevent the import of certain goods from the Free City of Danzig into Poland are likely to bring about serious economic loss to the population of Danzig.

Should the Polish Government continue to support such measures, there would, in the opinion of the Reich Government, be no choice left to the Free City of Danzig, as matters stand, but to seek other export and, consequently, other import possibilities.

No. 446 Communication from the Under-Secretary of State at the Polish Foreign Ministry to the German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw, August 10, 1939

(Translation)

With the greatest surprise the Government of the Republic of Poland have taken note of the declaration given in Berlin on August 9, 1939, by the Secretary of State in the German Foreign Office to the Chargé d'Affaires a. i. of Poland on the relations existing between Poland and the Free City of Danzig.** The Polish Government, in fact, cannot perceive any legal foundation justifying Germany to interfere in the abovementioned relations.

* Cf. No. 432.
** Cf. No. 445.

Whatever discussions on the Danzig problem may have taken place between the Polish Government and the Government of the Reich, these had their foundation merely in the good will of the Government and did not arise out of any obligation whatsoever.

In reply to the aforesaid declaration of the Government of the Reich, the Polish Government are compelled to point out to the German Government that, as hitherto, they will in the future oppose by such means and measures as the Polish Government alone consider adequate, any attempt made by the authorities of the Free City of Danzig to jeopardize the rights and interests that Poland possesses in Danzig, on the basis of the agreement to which she is a part, and that the Polish Government will consider as an aggressive act any possible intervention of the Government of the Reich which may endanger these rights and interests.

No. 447 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, August 11, 1939

In amplification of yesterday's telephone message in which I reported M. Arciszewski's communication to me,* I advise you of the fact that M. Beck yesterday had asked the British and French Ambassadors to see him before Arciszewski received me. Obviously Beck preferred to get his allies' *placet* before he made his statement to us.

Wühlisch

No. 448 The German Ambassador in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, August 10, 1939

I paid a farewell visit to Lord Halifax yesterday before going away on leave. In general the conversation was carried on in a manner customary on such occasions; in the course of it, Halifax asked me whether the exchange of notes between the Senate and the Polish Representative Chodacki,** and the violent language used in the German press had brought about a threatening aggravation of the situation in Danzig. I drew at-

* Cf. No. 446.
** Cf. Nos. 432, 433, 434.

tention to the provoking article in the Czas* which had necessitated severe censure, as well as to the challenging language used by Chodacki in his exchange of notes with the Senate.** Again correctness of German point of view had been proved which held that final decision for war or peace rested with local Polish authorities—mostly chauvinistic and acting irresponsibly. This state of affairs revealed inner instability of Poland with its diverging political tendencies.

Halifax asserted that the British Government are making their moderating influence felt in Warsaw. Otherwise his remarks were confined to a repetition of the substance of his speech at Chatham House.***

Dirksen

No. 449 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, August 15, 1939

Today the French Ambassador called on me after his return from leave. The Ambassador calmly and firmly expressed approximately the following views on the present situation: France had taken up her position. Her relations to Poland and Britain were known. A conflict between Germany and Poland would automatically involve France. That was a fact and not the wish of France. On the contrary, there was nothing France desired more urgently than a German-Polish compromise, especially with regard to Danzig. He hoped that a settlement of this special question would also bring about a general German-Polish *détente*. This, in short, was the impression he had received during his last conversation with M. Daladier and M. Bonnet. His latest impression in Berlin, however, was that of a certain aggravation in the situation. He was especially disturbed by the fact that the latest German utterances repeatedly mentioned the question of honor; that obviously meant a serious aggravation of the situation.

I thereupon confirmed M. Coulondre's impression that the situation had changed since his going on leave in July. I then went back rather far and expounded the necessary arguments to characterize the unbridled suicidal policy of Poland. I spoke to M. Coulondre of Poland's note to Danzig of the Saturday before last, which amounted to an ultimatum, of the aggressive tone in the exchange of opinions between Berlin and Warsaw last week, of the provocative utterances of the inspired Polish press, of the continous measures for suppressing, impeding, banishing Germans

* On August 7, the Warsaw newspaper "Czas" wrote among other things: "The guns which protect the honor of Poland are pointing at Danzig. Everybody must realize that these guns will be fired if the authorities of the Free City, contrary to the obvious interests of the Danzig population, are going to confront Poland with a "fait accompli."

** Cf. Nos. 432, 433.

*** Cf. No. 312.

etc., adopted by Polish subordinate authorities. (In this connection I showed M. Coulondre a list which had just arrived.) I interpreted all this as being the practical result of the promises given by France and Britain to Poland. This was the harvest sown by the Western Powers in Poland.

M. Coulondre then made a little excursion into the past and represented the British-French guarantee to Poland as the inevitable result of Germany's having established a protectorate in Czechia. Apart from this the Ambassador asserted that, according to French reports, there was no lack of restraint in Warsaw, but that on the contrary the Polish Government remained quite calm.

As instructed, I then spoke in a very grave and warning tone and disputed M. Coulondre's statements most emphatically. The Polish Government, I pointed out, did not really govern the country. Paris apparently did not know what "Polish mismanagement" meant. The Polish Government must be out of their wits, otherwise threats, amounting to an ultimatum as lately applied to Danzig, could not have been pronounced by Polish diplomats. Such excesses only proved Poland's implicit confidence in her two big brothers in the West, who would surely help her. We could and would no longer stand the continuation of such an attitude on the part of Poland. Poland was running amok, and thus bringing her fate upon herself. Poland's folly, like every other folly, I continued, had certain merits: (1.) Poland's friends could see what they themselves had brought about, and (2.) by such conduct Poland released her friends from their obligation to support her, for one could not imagine that either France or Britain would risk her very existence in favor of her friend who had gone mad. I therefore did not understand why, at the beginning of our conversation, M. Coulondre could have described French assistance for Poland as natural and automatic.

M. Coulondre then mentioned that the Franco-Polish Treaty of Alliance had been strengthened still more by the guarantee given this year; France's legal obligation to Poland, however, was not the determining factor. For her security France needed balance of power in Europe. If this were disturbed in favor of Germany, i. e. if Poland were overrun by Germany now, it would be France's turn next; or else France's power would have to decline to the level of Belgium or the Netherlands. France would then be practically Germany's vassal and this is exactly what she did not wish to be.

I urgently requested the Ambassador to inform himself of Poland's real attitude and to rid himself of his completely erroneous idea regarding the behavior of his ally. He would surely draw the correct conclusions.

When M. Coulondre asked me what these conclusions were, I told him that Poland would have to comply with Germany's justified claims

and that she would have to alter her general attitude towards Germany completely.

Finally the Ambassador said that his Government would not consent to bringing any pressure to bear on Warsaw as they had done on Prague last year. The situation had changed since then.

I replied drily to M. Coulondre that it was not for me to offer advice to him or his Government. They should consider the facts and allow them to speak for themselves.

In the end the Ambassador assured me of his readiness to co-operate in any way towards the maintenance of peace. A European war would end in a defeat of all parties, even of the Russia of today. The victor would not be Stalin but Trotzky.

Weizsäcker

No. 450 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, August 15, 1939

After a long interval the British Ambassador today came to see me to discuss the situation. He asked me without much preamble about the result of Count Ciano's visit to Salzburg.

In my reply I did not refer to Count Ciano and my conversation with him, but I described the deterioration in the situation between Berlin and Warsaw and approximately followed the line of thought which I had taken up this morning, as instructed, in my conversation with the French Ambassador. Perhaps I chose even stronger terms in regard to Polish policy when speaking to Sir Nevile Henderson than in my conversation with M. Coulondre.

When we were discussing the question of the customs inspectors,* Sir Nevile Henderson made an assertion about German smuggling of arms and an extensive militarization of Danzig. He said that Polish rights and interests were affected by this, without Poland's having remonstrated. I most emphatically contested his view that the military measures taken in Danzig were unjustified. Danzig was only protecting itself against its protector. This I hoped was still permitted. I further explained how British policy had granted a jester's license to the Polish Government, of which the Poles were now making full use. Britain would now have to realize where her policy of encirclement had led her, and would, I suppose, hardly be inclined or obliged to allow her Polish friends, who had completely lost their heads, to lead her to disaster.

The conversation with Sir Nevile Henderson this afternoon again revealed a fundamental difference of opinion regarding the Polish attitude.

* Cf. No. 423 ff.

Sir Nevile Henderson, or I should say his Government, asserted that Poland was reasonable and calm, and he disputed the fact that she was in a position to commit an act of aggression against Germany. In all other cases of a Polish-German conflict, however, the British Government were under an obligation to give her armed assistance and were firmly determined to do so. Poland, however, would not undertake any major step without previous consultation with Britain.

I then asked the Ambassador whether London could really have consented to the threatening note to Danzig,* or to the Polish declaration handed to us in the middle of last week,** or to all the provocative speeches and articles and to the continuous suppression of the German minority. The limit of our patience had been reached. The policy of a country like Poland consisted of a thousand provocations. I asked whether Britain believed herself able to restrain Poland from every new and unconsidered action? As long as Warsaw felt itself protected by London, Britain's belief in her ability to manage the Poles was a mere theory. The reverse was the case.

After that I had to deny the assertion that instructions to adopt a more rigorous attitude had reached Danzig through our Consul-General there. I termed this statement, which had been made to the Ambassador, a direct lie.

The Ambassador then touched upon the question as to whether the problem of Danzig could not be postponed until it could be solved in a more peaceful atmosphere. He believed that we should then have better prospects of success. Sir Nevile Henderson thought that I should not be able to answer this question. I replied, however, that this question was purely theoretical, for a postponement could only be used by the Poles to aggravate the mischief which they had already caused; there was, therefore, no question of an improvement in the atmosphere.

The Ambassador then asked whether we could not take the initiative in arranging German-Polish negotiations. I thereupon reminded him that, M. Beck, in his last speech in the Sejm, had used the tones of a Pasha speaking from his divan when he declared that if Germany adapted herself to Polish principles he would be ready graciously to accept proposals framed accordingly. Besides, it was only last week that the Polish Government had declared that every German initiative at the expense of Polish demands was to be considered an act of aggression. I therefore saw no possibility for any German initiative.

The Ambassador then intimated that extensive German-British discussions on larger issues such as the colonies, raw materials, etc., might take place later on, but at the same time he said that the situation was much more difficult and critical than last year, for Mr. Chamberlain could not fly to Germany again.

* Cf. No. 432.
** Cf. No. 446.

As far as I was concerned, I said, I was unable to offer any advice except that Poland should see reason as soon as possible with regard to the acute problem of Danzig and her general attitude towards us.

Sir Nevile Henderson left me, conscious of the gravity and precariousness of the situation.

Weizsäcker

No. 451 Memorandum of the State Secretary at the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, August 18, 1939

The British Ambassador called on me today to tell me that he would probably fly to Salzburg next Tuesday. Wednesday was the big day in the motor cycle races, in which a number of Englishmen were participating.

Touching upon the political situation, Sir Nevile Henderson once more remarked that he was convinced that Poland would not let herself be carried away to commit provocative acts. The British Government would see to this.

Once more I had to note Sir Nevile Henderson's complete misconception of the Polish attitude towards the Germans, and I explained the real facts of the case to him. Respecting this we established a fundamental difference between British and German information and opinions. Henderson once more repeated most emphatically that Germany should not make the mistake of believing that Britain would not give armed assistance to the Poles. After all, he knew the present situation in Britain.

Weizsäcker

No. 452 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Washington to the Foreign Office

Report

(Translation)

Washington, D. C., August 21, 1939

As I hear from a reliable source, Mr. Bevin, Secretary General of the Transport and General Worker's Union of Great Britain, who is at the moment in New York as a delegate to the Congress for Democratic Education, expressed the opinion to an American friend that war was inevitable unless Germany gave in. The reason Mr. Bevin gave for this was that he and his trade-union colleagues knew the leading personalities in the British Government. They themselves had experienced in their

struggles that these people held their opinion once they had made up their minds. This was definitely the case today, and the Labor Party had co-operated in bringing about this resolute attitude.

Thomsen

No. 453 The German Chargé d'Affaires in London to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

London, August 22, 1939

Text of the official *communiqué* concerning today's Cabinet meeting:

"The cabinet at their meeting today considered the international situation in all its bearings, in addition to reports that have been received as to military movements in Germany. The cabinet also took note of the report that a non-aggression pact between the German and Soviet Governments was about to be concluded.*

"They had no hesitation in deciding that such an event would in no way affect their obligation to Poland, which they have repeatedly stated in public and which they are determined to fulfill.

"Parliament has been summoned to meet on Thursday next, when the Government propose to invite both Houses to pass through all its stages, the emergency powers (defense) bill. The effect of this will be to place the Government in a position to take any necessary measures without delay should the situation require it. In the meantime, further measures of a precautionary character are being taken by the department; for instance, the calling up of certain personnel for the navy, army and for civil defense. Arrangements are also being made to deal with certain matters affecting the export from this country of essential materials and commodities.

"While taking these measures of precaution, which the Government consider necessary at this time, they remain of the opinion that there is nothing in the difficulties that have arisen between Germany and Poland which would justify the use of force, involving a European war with all its tragic consequences, as the Prime Minister has repeatedly said.

"There are indeed no questions in Europe which should not be capable of peaceful solution, if only conditions of confidence could be restored.

"H. M. Government are, as they always have been, ready to assist in creating such conditions, but if in spite of all their efforts others insist on the use to force, they are prepared and determined to resist it to the uttermost."

Kordt

* Cf. No. 348.

No. 454 Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, to the Fuehrer, August 22, 1939

10 Downing Street, Whitehall, August 22, 1939

Your Excellency:

Your Excellency will have already heard of certain measures taken by His Majesty's Government, and announced in the press and on the wireless this evening.

These steps have, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, been rendered necessary by the military movements which have been reported from Germany, and by the fact that apparently the announcement of a German-Soviet Agreement is taken in some quarters in Berlin to indicate that intervention by Great Britain on behalf of Poland is no longer a contingency that need be reckoned with. No greater mistake could be made. Whatever may prove to be the nature of the German-Soviet Agreement, it cannot alter Great Britain's obligation to Poland which His Majesty's Government have stated in public repeatedly and plainly, and which they are determined to fulfil.

It has been alleged that, if His Majesty's Government had made their position more clear in 1914, the great catastrophe would have been avoided. Whether or not there is any force in that allegation, His Majesty's Government are resolved that on this occasion there shall be no such tragic misunderstanding.

If the case should arise, they are resolved, and prepared, to employ without delay all the forces at their command, and it is impossible to foresee the end of hostilities once engaged. It would be a dangerous illusion to think that, if war once starts, it will come to an early end even if a success on any one of the several fronts on which it will be engaged should have been secured.

Having thus made our position perfectly clear, I wish to repeat to you my conviction that war between our two peoples would be the greatest calamity that could occur. I am certain that it is desired neither by our people, nor by yours, and I cannot see that there is anything in the questions arising between Germany and Poland which could not and should not be resolved without the use of force, if only a situation of confidence could be restored to enable discussions to be carried on in an atmosphere different from that which prevails today.

We have been, and at all times will be, ready to assist in creating conditions in which such negotiations could take place, and in which it might be possible concurrently to discuss the wider problems affecting the future of international relations, including matters of interest to us and to you.

The difficulties in the way of any peaceful discussion in the present state of tension are, however, obvious, and the longer that tension is maintained, the harder will it be for reason to prevail.

These difficulties, however, might be mitigated, if not removed, provided that there could for an initial period be a truce on both sides —and indeed on all sides—to press polemics and to all incitement.

If such a truce could be arranged, then, at the end of that period, during which steps could be taken to examine and deal with complaints made by either side as to the treatment of minorities, it is reasonable to hope that suitable conditions might have been established for direct negotiations between Germany and Poland upon the issues between them (with the aid of a neutral intermediary, if both sides should think that that would be helpful).

But I am bound to say that there would be slender hope of bringing such negotiations to successful issue unless it were understood beforehand that any settlement reached would, when concluded, be guaranteed by other Powers. His Majesty's Government would be ready, if desired, to make such contribution as they could to the effective operation of such guarantees.

At this moment I confess I can see no other way to avoid a catastrophe that will involve Europe in war.

In view of the grave consequences to humanity which may follow from the action of their rulers, I trust that Your Excellency will weigh with the utmost deliberation the considerations which I have put before you.

Yours sincerely,

Neville Chamberlain

No. 455 Conversation of the Fuehrer with the British Ambassador, Berchtesgaden, August 23, 1939

Memorandum of Herr von Loesch, Interpreter

(Translation)

The British Ambassador began by saying that he was bringing a letter on behalf of the British Government. Originally a more prominent person was to have done so, but the course of events had called for prompt action, especially as the British Government had been much surprised by the news of the German-Soviet pact.

The Fuehrer stated that he had already seen a translation of the letter. He was in the act of composing a written reply, but in the meantime he would give the Ambassador a few verbal explanations to the same effect. Sir Nevile Henderson replied that he hoped a solution of the critical situation could be found; Britain had full appreciation for the fact that German-British co-operation was necessary for the welfare of Europe.

The Fuehrer replied that this should have been realized sooner. When the Ambassador raised the objection that the British Government had given guarantees and had to abide by them, the Fuehrer answered that he had made it clear in his reply that Germany was not responsible for the guarantees given by Britain, but that Britain was responsible for the consequences arising from these obligations. It was Britain's business to be clear on this point. He had informed the Polish Government that every further persecution of the Germans in Poland would result in immediate action on the part of the Reich. On the other hand, as he had heard, Mr. Chamberlain had provided for increased military preparations in Britain. German preparations had been limited to purely defensive measures. "Should I," said the Fuehrer, "hear of further measures of this kind being put into effect on the part of Britain, today or tomorrow, I shall order immediate general mobilization in Germany!"

When the Ambassador remarked that war would then be unavoidable, the Fuehrer repeated his statement about mobilization.

He pointed out that people in Britain were always talking about the "poisoned atmosphere." The fact was that the "atmosphere" had been "poisoned" by Britain. Had it not been for Britain he would have come to a peaceful understanding with Czechoslovakia last year, and the same would have certainly been achieved this year with Poland in the Danzig question. Britain alone was responsible—of this the whole of Germany was firmly convinced. Today in Poland hundreds of thousands of minority Germans were ill-treated, dragged away to concentration camps and driven from their homes. He had extensive documentary evidence on the subject, which, so far, he had refrained from publishing. Britain had given a blank cheque for all this, and now she would have to pay up. Now that Britain had given a guarantee, he, the Fuehrer, had seen himself compelled to take up a firm attitude on this question. He could not permit tens of thousands of fellow Germans to be slaughtered just because of a British whim.

He recalled the fact that formerly Germany had lived on good terms with Poland, and that he had made a decent and fair offer to Poland. This offer had been sabotaged by the Western Powers and, as in the case of Czechoslovakia, this had to a large extent been due to the reports of military attachés, who had spread false rumors of a German mobilization.

Here the Ambassador argued that the Polish Government had refused the German offer before Britain had given guarantees.

The Fuehrer continued by saying that Mr. Chamberlain could not have devised a better plan to unite all Germany than that of standing up for Poland and for a pro-Polish settlement of the Danzig question. He saw no possibilities in negotiations, because he was convinced that the British Government were not at all interested in a settlement. He could only repeat once more that a general mobilization would be

proclaimed in Germany if further military measures were adopted by Britain. The same held good for France.

After the Fuehrer had emphasized the fact that all this would be set down in writing, he stated that he had done all that a man could do. Britain had made an enemy of the man who had wanted to become her greatest friend. Now Britain would come to know a Germany other than the one she had been accustomed to for so many years.

The Ambassador replied that it was known in Britain that Germany was strong, a fact which she had often proved lately.

The Fuehrer stated that he had made a generous offer to Poland, but Britain had interfered.

The Fuehrer then explained how, on this same spot some months ago, he had talked over the same settlement with Colonel Beck, who then described the settlement as too sudden, but who, nevertheless, saw its possibilities. In March he had repeated his proposals. At that time, the Fuehrer emphasized, Poland would certainly have agreed if Britain had not interfered. The British press had then stated that the liberty of both Poland and Roumania was being threatened.

The Fuehrer then explained that at the least attempt on the part of Poland to take further action against Germany or against Danzig, he would immediately intervene, and furthermore, that a mobilization in the West would be answered by a German mobilization.

The Ambassador: "Is this a threat?"—The Fuehrer: "No, a protective measure!"—

He then stated that the British Government had preferred anything to co-operation with Germany. On the contrary, their determination to destroy had led them to turn to France, to Turkey and to Moscow.

Against this the Ambassador protested, stating that Britain did not want to destroy Germany.

The Fuehrer replied that that was nevertheless his firm conviction, and so he had built the Siegfried Line at a cost of 9 billion Reichsmarks in order to protect Germany from an attack from the West.

Sir Nevile Henderson drew attention to the fact that the change in the British attitude dated from March 15, to which the Fuehrer replied that Poland had become excited on her own account over the Carpatho-Ukraine. Moreover the internal state of affairs in Czechoslovakia had become unbearable for Germany. Bohemia and Moravia, after all, owed their culture and civilization to Germans and not to Englishmen. He was convinced that the best possible solution had been reached in Czechia. President Hacha had been happy to find a way out of the crisis; it did not, of course, matter to Britain whether or not there was shooting in the heart of Europe.

Finally the Fuehrer assured the Ambassador that he had no wish to reproach him and that he had always appreciated what the British Ambassador personally had done for German-British friendship.

The Ambassador spoke of the tragic development which would now ensue, whereupon the Fuehrer, basing his remarks on Britain's avowed intentions on this point, said that if war came it would be a life and death struggle: and Britain would have more to lose.

Sir Neville Henderson remarked that according to Clausewitz war always brought surprises; all he knew was that everybody would do his duty.

The Fuehrer said that Germany had never undertaken anything that could harm Britain; in spite of that Britain was taking sides against Germany. He once more referred to the question of Danzig and Poland, in which the British point of view was "rather to have war than anything to Germany's advantage."

Sir Nevile Henderson stated that he had done his best. Lately he had written to a German Minister that the Fuehrer, whom it had taken ten years to win Germany, would also have to give Britain more time.

The Fuehrer stated that the fact that Britain was against Germany in the Danzig question had profoundly shocked the German nation.

The Ambassador argued that it was merely the principle of force which they had opposed. In reply to which the Fuehrer asked whether Britain had ever found a solution for any of the idiocies of Versailles by way of negotiations.

The Ambassador had nothing to reply to this, and the Fuehrer stated that according to a German proverb it takes two to make a friendship.

Sir Nevile Henderson then stressed the fact that he personally had never believed in a pact between Britain, France and Russia. His opinion was that Russia by the delay only wanted to get rid of Mr. Chamberlain, in order ultimately to profit by a war. He personally would rather see Germany conclude a treaty with Russia than have Britain do so.

The Fuehrer answered: "Make no mistake. It will be a treaty lasting for many years."

The conversation ended with the Fuehrer's statement that the Ambassador would receive a written reply in the afternoon.

von Loesch

No. 456 The Fuehrer to Mr. Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, August 23, 1939

(Translation)

August 23, 1939

Your Excellency:

The Ambassador of His Britannic Majesty has just handed me a note in which Your Excellency, in the name of the British Government, has drawn attention to a number of points, which, in your opinion, are of extreme importance.

I beg to reply to your note as follows:

1. Germany has never sought to enter into conflict with Great Britain nor at any time interfered where British interests were concerned. On the contrary, Germany has for many years, although unfortunately without success, attempted to gain the friendship of Great Britain. For this reason, Germany voluntarily undertook a restriction of her own interests throughout a large area in Europe which would otherwise have been difficult to justfy from a national political point of view.

2. The German Reich, however, has, like every other state, certain interests which it is impossible for it to renounce and which lie within the category that Germany's past history and her economic necessities have rendered of vital importance. Certain of these problems were, and are, of the utmost importance to any German Government both from a national political and from a psychological point of view.

One of these problems is that of the German city of Danzig and the problem of the Polish Corridor connected therewith. Only a few years ago this fact was recognized by numerous statesmen, by authorities in historical research and literary men, even in England. I should like to add that the civilization of all those areas which come within the sphere of German interests aforementioned, and especially those provinces which have returned to the Reich within the past 18 months, was developed not by Englishmen but exclusively by Germans, and, in part, during a period of history which covers more than the last thousand years.

3. Germany was prepared to settle the problem of Danzig and of the Polish Corridor by a very generous proposal, made once for all, and by means of negotiations. The assertions disseminated by Great Britain with regard to the mobilization of German troops against Poland, the assertion concerning aggressive intentions with regard to Roumania, Hungary, etc., as also the more recent so-called guarantees given to Poland, effectually destroyed any inclinations on the part of Poland to negotiate on a basis which would at the same time be acceptable to Germany.

4. The general assurance given by Great Britain to Poland that Great Britain would support Poland in case of conflict in any circumstance, irrespective of the causes giving rise to such conflict, could only be regarded here as an incitement to let loose, under cover of what might be termed a blank cheque, a wave of unspeakable terror against the one and a half million Germans domiciled in Poland. The atrocities which have taken place there since that time were terrible indeed for those on whom they were inflicted, but intolerable for the German Reich, which, as one of the Great Powers, was expected to watch them idly. In regard to the Free City of Danzig, Poland has, on countless occasions, infringed its rights, sent demands which were in the nature of an ultimatum and begun a process of economic strangulation.

5. The German Government informed the Polish Government a short time ago that they were not inclined to accept these developments in silence, that they would not tolerate the despatch of further notes couched in the form of an ultimatum to Danzig, that they would not tolerate a continuance of acts of violence inflicted on the German section of the population, nor would they tolerate the ruin of the Free City of Danzig by means of economic pressure, that is to say, the destruction of the very existence of the population of Danzig by a form of customs blockade, nor would they tolerate the continuance of such acts of provocation against the Reich. Regardless of the above, a solution must and will be found for the problem of Danzig and of the Polish Corridor.

6. Your Excellency informs me in the name of the British Government that in the event of any act of interference on the part of Germany, you will be compelled to support Poland. I have taken due note of your statement and can assure you that it can in no way shake the determination of the German Government to protect the interests of the Reich as set forth in § 5. I likewise agree with your assurance that the ensuing war would, in this case, be a long one. If Germany is attacked by Britain, she is prepared and determined to fight. I have often declared to the German people and to the whole world that there can be no doubt as to the determination of the new German Reich to accept privation and misfortune in any form and at any time rather than sacrifice her national interests or even her honor.

7. The German Government have received information of the fact that the British Government intend to carry out mobilization measures, which in their nature are solely directed against Germany, as is stated in Your Excellency's note addressed to me. This is stated also to apply to France. As Germany never intended to adopt military measures other than those of a purely defensive nature against either Great Britain or France and, as has already been emphasized, never has intended nor intends in the future to attack either Great Britain or France, the announcement which Your Excellency confirmed in your note can only constitute an intended threat against the Reich. I must, therefore, inform Your Excellency that in the event of such military measures being taken, I shall order the immediate mobilization of the German armed forces.

8. The question of a settlement of European problems in a peaceful spirit cannot be decided by Germany but chiefly by those who, since the crime of the Treaty of Versailles was committed, have steadily and obstinately opposed any peaceful revision of its terms. Only a change of attitude on the part of the Powers responsible for the Treaty can bring about a change for the better in the existing relations between Britain and Germany. During my whole life-time I have struggled to achieve a friendship between Britain and Germany, but the attitude adopted by British diplomacy, up to the present at least, has served to convince me of

the hopelessness of such an attempt. If the future were to bring a change in this respect, none would welcome it more than I.

Adolf Hitler

No. 457 Statement Made by the Fuehrer to the British Ambassador, August 25, 1939, at 1:30 P. M.

(Translation)

The Fuehrer declared at the outset that the British Ambassador at the close of their last conversation has expressed the hope that it would still prove possible to arrive at an understanding between Germany and England. He, the Fuehrer, had thereupon considered the situation once more and intended today to take a step in regard to England which was to be as decisive as the step taken in regard to Russia, the result of which had been the recent pact.

Yesterday's meeting of the House of Commons and the speeches made by Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax were further reasons why the Fuehrer had again invited the British Ambassador to meet him.

The assertion that Germany wanted to conquer the world was ridiculous. The British Empire covered a territory of 40,000,000 square kilometres, Russia of 19,000,000 square kilometres, America of 9,500,000 square kilometres and Germany of less than 600,000 square kilometres. It was thus quite clear who wanted to conquer the world.

The Fuehrer informed the British Ambassador of the following:

1. The acts of provocation committed by Poland had become intolerable, irrespective of who might be responsible for them. If the Polish Government contested their responsibility, this merely proved that they themselves had no longer any influence on their military subordinates. In the preceding night 21 new frontier incidents had occurred. On the German side the utmost discipline had been displayed. All the incidents were due to Polish provocation. Besides this, non-military aircraft had been fired on. If the Polish Government declared themselves not responsible, this merely proved that they were unable to keep control over their own people.

2. Germany was resolved under all circumstances to put an end to these Macedonian conditions on her eastern frontier, not only in the interests of law and order but also for the sake of European peace.

3. The problem of Danzig and the Corridor would have to be solved. The British Prime Minister had made a speech which had done nothing towards bringing about a change in the German attitude. This speech might, if anything, give rise to a desperate and incalculable war between Germany and England, a war which would cause far greater bloodshed than that of 1914. In contrast to the last world war, Germany would not have to carry on a war on two fronts. The agreement concluded with Russia was unconditional and represented a turning point in the foreign policy of the Reich with the greatest long-range possibilities. Under no circumstances would Russia and Germany again take up arms against one another. Apart from this fact the agreements made with Russia would safeguard Germany, in economic respects also, for a war of the longest duration.

The Fuehrer had always been strongly in favor of Anglo-German understanding. A war between England and Germany could, under the most favorable circumstances, bring Germany an advantage, but certainly could not bring the slightest gain to England.

The Fuehrer declared that the German-Polish problem had to be and would be settled. He was, however, ready and resolved to approach England again, after this settlement, with a generous and comprehensive offer. He himself was a man of great decisions, and he would in this case also be capable of a great action. He approved of the British Empire and was prepared to pledge himself personally to its existence and to devote the might of the German Reich to that end, provided

(1.) that his colonial demands, which were limited and could be settled by peaceful negotiations, were fulfilled, for which he was prepared to concede a most protracted time-limit;

(2.) that his obligations to Italy remained untouched; in other words the Fuehrer did not expect England to give up her French obligations and could for his part not abandon his Italian obligations;

(3.) he wished also to emphasize Germany's unalterable resolution never again to enter into a conflict with Russia.

The Fuehrer would then be prepared to enter into agreements with Great Britain which, as he had already emphasized, would not only provide a German guarantee of the existence of the British Empire under all circumstances, but would, if necessary, assure German assistance for the British Empire, irrespective of where such assistance might be required. The Fuehrer would then also be ready to accept a reasonable limitation of armaments, in accordance with the new political situation and economic requirements. Finally the Fuehrer renewed his assurance that he

was not interested in western problems and that he did not for one moment consider any frontier correction in the west. The western line of fortifications, which had cost billions, was the final frontier of the Reich in the west.

If the British Government would consider these suggestions, they might end in a blessing not only for Germany but also for the British Empire. If the British Government rejected the suggestions, war would be inevitable. Under no circumstances, however, would such a war add to the strength of Great Britain. The last war had amply proved this.

The Fuehrer repeated that he was a man of great decisions to which he felt himself bound, and that this was his final proposal. Immediately after the settlement of the German-Polish question he would approach the British Government with an offer.

No. 458 Memorandum of the Director of the Political Department of the Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, August 25, 1939

According to instructions, I telephoned to the British Ambassador at 4:15 p. m. today, and drew his attention to the report published in the evening edition of today's *Berliner Börsenzeitung* and other evening papers concerning the massacre at Bielitz where eight persons were killed and a number of others were injured.*

Woermann

No. 459 British-Polish Agreement of Mutual Assistance, August 25, 1939

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Polish Government:

Desiring to place on a permanent basis the collaboration between their respective countries resulting from the assurances of mutual assistance of a defensive character which they have already exchanged;

Have resolved to conclude an Agreement for that purpose and have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

* On August 31, Herr von der Damerau, German Consul at Teschen, reported on the matter to the German Embassy in Warsaw: A motor truck in which 30 members of the German minority who had been arrested in Bielitz were being conveyed into the interior of the country, skidded on the road shortly after leaving Bielitz and several of the minority Germans fell off. The Polish escort accompanying the prisoners seized this opportunity to fire at random on the Germans packed in the truck, killing eight and wounding a large number.

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

The Rt. Hon. Viscount Halifax, K. G., G. C. S. I., G. C. I. E., Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs;

The Polish Government:

His Excellency Count Edward Raczynski, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Polish Republic in London;

who, having exchanged their Full Powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following provisions:—

Article 1

Should one of the Contracting Parties become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of aggression by the latter against that Contracting Party, the other Contracting Party will at once give the Contracting Party engaged in hostilities all the support and assistance in its power.*

Article 2

(1) The provisions of Article 1 will also apply in the event of any action by a European Power which clearly threatened, directly or indirectly, the independence of one of the Contracting Parties, and was of such a nature that the Party in question considered it vital to resist it with its armed forces.

(2) Should one of the Contracting Parties become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of action by that Power which threatened the independence or neutrality of another European State in such a way as to constitute a clear menace to the security of that Contracting Party, the provisions of Article 1 will apply, without prejudice, however, to the rights of the other European State concerned.

Article 3

Should a European Power attempt to undermine the independence of one of the Contracting Parties by processes of economic penetration or in any other way, the Contracting Parties will support each other in resistance to such attempts. Should the European Power concerned thereupon embark on hostilities against one of the Contracting Parties, the provisions of Article 1 will apply.

Article 4

The methods of applying the undertakings of mutual assistance provided for by the present Agreement are established between the competent naval, military and air authorities of the Contracting Parties.

* In answer to a question asked by Mr. Harvey, M. P., as to whether the obligations of mutual assistance contained in the British-Polish Agreement dated August 25, 1939, were to cover the case of aggression made by non-German Powers, including Russia, Mr. Butler, British Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, on October 19, 1939, made the following written reply: "No sir. During the negotiations which led up to the signature of the agreement, it was understood between the Polish Government and His Majesty's Government that the agreement should only cover the case of aggression by Germany; and the Government confirm that this is so."

Article 5

Without prejudice to the foregoing undertakings of the Contracting Parties to give each other mutual support and assistance immediately on the outbreak of hostilities, they will exchange complete and speedy information concerning any development which might threaten their independence and, in particular, concerning any development which threatened to call the said undertakings into operation.

Article 6

(1) The Contracting Parties will communicate to each other the terms of any undertakings of assistance against aggression which they have already given or may in future give to other States.

(2) Should either of the Contracting Parties intend to give such an undertaking after the coming into force of the present Agreement, the other Contracting Party shall, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the Agreement, be informed thereof.

(3) Any new undertaking which the Contracting Parties may enter into in future shall neither limit their obligations under the present Agreement nor indirectly create new obligations between the Contracting Party not participating in these undertakings and the third State concerned.

Article 7

Should the Contracting Parties be engaged in hostilities in consequence of the application of the present Agreement, they will not conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.

Article 8

(1) The present Agreement shall remain in force for a period of five years.

(2) Unless denounced six months before the expiry of this period it shall continue in force, each Contracting Party having thereafter the right to denounce it at any time by giving six months' notice to that effect.

(3) The present Agreement shall come into force on signature.

In faith whereof the above-named Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Agreement and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done in English in duplicate, at London, the 25th August, 1939. A Polish text shall subsequently be agreed upon between the Contracting Parties and both texts will then be authentic.

(L. S.) **Halifax** (L. S.) **Edward Raczynski**

No. 460 M. Daladier, French Premier, to the Fuehrer, August 26, 1939

(Translation)

Paris, August 26, 1939

Your Excellency:

The French Ambassador in Berlin has brought your personal message to my knowledge.

At an hour when you speak of the gravest responsibility which two Heads of Government can be asked to take, namely, that of shedding the blood of two great peoples desiring only peace and work, I owe it to you personally and to our respective nations to state that the fate of peace still rests in your hands.

You cannot doubt my feelings towards Germany, or the friendly feelings of France for your nation. No Frenchman has done more than I have to ensure not only peace between our two peoples, but also sincere co-operation in your own interests as well as in those of Europe and of the world.

Unless you are prepared to credit the French nation with a lower ideal of honor than the one with which I credit the German people, you cannot doubt that France will faithfully fulfil her obligation towards other powers which, like Poland, are, I am convinced, desirous of living at peace with Germany.

Both convictions are fully compatible with one another.

To this day there is nothing which might prevent a peaceful solution of the international crisis in a spirit of honor and dignity for all nations as long as the same will for peace prevails on all sides.

Together with the good will of France I proclaim that of all her allies, I personally guarantee the readiness always shown by Poland to have mutual recourse to methods of free conciliation such as can be envisaged between the Governments of two sovereign nations. With a perfectly clear conscience I can give you an assurance that among the differences which have arisen between Germany and Poland with regard to the Danzig question, there is not a single one which could not be submitted to such a procedure with a view to finding a just and peaceful solution.

Upon my honor I can also state that in the clear and sincere solidarity of France with Poland and her allies there is nothing that might in any way impair the peaceful disposition of my country. This solidarity has never prevented us from supporting this peaceful disposition in Poland, and it does not do so today.

At so critical a moment I sincerely believe that no noble-minded person could understand how a war of destruction could be waged without a final attempt at a peaceful settlement between Germany and Poland having been undertaken. Your desire for peace could exercise its influence with full determination towards this end without detracting anything from

Germany's honor. As Head of the French Government, desirous of attaining full harmony between the French and the German nations, yet bound on the other hand to Poland by ties of friendship and my pledged word, I am prepared to make every effort that an honorable man can make to bring this endeavor to a successful end.

Like myself you were a soldier in the last war. You know as well as I do the feelings of disgust and universal condemnation which the destruction caused by war left in the conscience of all nations, irrespective of its issue. The idea which I cherish of your great part as leader of the German nation on the road to peace towards the fulfillment of its tasks in the common effort towards civilization, prompts me to ask you for an answer to this my proposal.

Should French and German blood once more have to flow, just as it did twenty-five years ago, in an even longer and more murderous war, each nation will fight fully confident of its ultimate victory. Yet we can be sure that ruin and barbarity will be the most certain victors.

Daladier

No. 461 The Fuehrer to M. Daladier, French Premier, August 27, 1939

(Translation)

Berlin, August 27, 1939.

Your Excellency:

I appreciate the concern you have expressed. I have always been equally conscious of the grave responsibility placed upon those who must decide the fate of nations. As an ex-soldier, I know as well as you do the horrors of war. This spirit and knowledge have guided me in a sincere endeavor to remove all causes of conflict between our two nations. I once told the French people quite frankly that the return of the Saar territory would be the basis for the achievement of this aim. Once that territory was returned, I immediately solemnly renounced any further claims which might affect France. The German people approved of my attitude. As you were able to see for yourself when you were in Germany last, the German people, conscious of the way they themselves behaved, did not and still do not entertain any animosity or still less hatred against their former brave opponents. On the contrary, once peace was definitely established along our western frontier, there came an increasing sympathy, at any rate on the part of the German nation,—a sympathy markedly demonstrated on many occasions. The construction of the great western fortifications which have cost and will still cost many billion marks, is documentary evidence that Germany has accepted and fixed the final frontier of the Reich. In doing so, the German people renounced

two provinces which once belonged to the old German Reich, were later on regained at the price of many lives, and were finally defended at the price of still more lives. Your Excellency will admit that this renunciation was not merely a gesture for tactical reasons but a decision confirmed by all our subsequent measures. You, Excellency, cannot cite a single instance in which this final settlement of the German frontier in the West has ever been disputed by one line or word. I believed that by this renunciation and by this attitude every possible cause of conflict between our two nations, which might have led to a repetition of the tragic years of 1914 to 1918, had been eliminated. This voluntary limitation of German claims in the West cannot, however, be regarded as an acceptance of the Dictate of Versailles in all other fields. Year by year I have tried earnestly to achieve the revision of at least the most impossible and most unbearable of all the conditions of this Dictate through negotiation. This proved impossible. Many enlightened men of all nations believed and were convinced that revision was bound to come. Whatever objection may be raised against my methods, whatever fault may be found with them, it cannot be overlooked or denied that I succeeded without any more bloodshed in finding solutions which were in many cases satisfactory not only for Germany. By the manner in which these solutions were accomplished, statesmen of other nations were relieved of their obligation, which they often found impossible to fulfill, of having to accept responsibility for this revision before their own people. One thing I feel sure Your Excellency will admit; namely, that the revision was bound to come. The Dictate of Versailles was unbearable. No Frenchman with a sense of honor and certainly not you, M. Daladier, would, in a similar position, have acted differently from the way I did. I therefore tried to remove this most insane stipulation of the Dictate of Versailles. I made an offer to the Polish Government which actually shocked the German people. No one but I could have dared to come forward with such a proposal. Therefore I could make it only once. I am firmly convinced that if Poland at that time had been advised to take a sensible course instead of being incited by a wild campaign of the British press against Germany, accompanied by rumors of German mobilization, then Europe would today be able to enjoy a state of profound peace for the next 25 years. Actually, it was the lie about German aggression that excited public opinion in Poland; the Polish Government were handicapped in making necessary and clear decisions and, above all, their judgment on the extent of Poland's possibilities was clouded by the subsequent promise of a guarantee. The Polish Government rejected the proposals. Firmly convinced that Britain and France would now fight for Poland, Polish public opinion began to raise demands which might best be described as sheer lunacy were they not so extraordinarily dangerous. At that time unbearable terrorism set in; physical and economic oppression of more than one and a half millions of Germans living in the territories severed from the Reich. I do not intend to speak of the atrocities which have occurred.

Even in Danzig the outrages committed by the Polish authorities fully created the impression that the city was apparently hopelessly delivered up to the arbitrary action of a power that is foreign to the national character of the city and its population.

May I ask, M. Daladier, how you as a Frenchman would act if, by the unfortunate ending of a bravely-fought war, one of your provinces was separated by a corridor in the possession of an alien power, and a large city—let us say Marseilles—was prevented from bearing allegiance to France, while Frenchmen in this territory were being persecuted, beaten, maltreated and even murdered in a bestial manner. You are a Frenchman, M. Daladier, and I therefore know how you would act. I am a German, M. Daladier, and you will not doubt my sense of honor and my sense of duty which make me act in exactly the same way. If you had to face a calamity such as confronts us, would you, M. Daladier, understand how Germany, for no reason at all, could use her influence to ensure that such a corridor through France should remain? That the stolen territories should not be returned, and that Marseilles should be forbidden to join France? I certainly cannot imagine Germany fighting you for such a cause. I, for Germany, renounced our claim to Alsace-Lorraine in order to avoid further bloodshed. Still less would we shed blood in order to maintain such an injustice as I have pictured, which would be as intolerable for you as it would be meaningless for us. My feelings on everything expressed in your letter, M. Daladier, are the same as yours. Perhaps we, as ex-soldiers, should readily understand each other on many points. Yet I would ask you to appreciate also this; namely, that no nation with a sense of honor can ever give up almost two million people and see them maltreated on its own frontiers. I therefore formulated a clear demand: Danzig and the Corridor must return to Germany. The Macedonian conditions prevailing along our eastern frontier must cease. I see no possibility of persuading Poland, who deems herself safe from attack by virtue of guarantees given to her, to agree to a peaceful solution. Unless we are determined under the circumstances to solve the question one way or the other, I would despair of an honorable future for my country. If fate decrees that our two peoples should fight one another once more over this question, it would be from different motives. I for my part, M. Daladier, would fight with my people for the reparation of an injustice, while the others would fight for its retention. This is all the more tragic in view of the fact that many great men of your nation have long since recognized the folly of the solution found in 1919 and the impossibility of keeping it up for ever. I am fully conscious of the grave consequences which such a conflict would involve. But I think that Poland would suffer most, for whatever the issue of such a war, the Polish State of today would in any case be lost.

That our two peoples should now engage in another murderous war of destruction causes me as much pain as it does you, M. Daladier.

Unfortunately, as stated earlier in my letter, I see no possibility open to us of influencing Poland to take a saner attitude and thus to remedy a situation which is unbearable for both the German people and the German Reich.

Adolf Hitler

No. 462 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telegram

(Translation)

Warsaw, August 27, 1939

One of the foreign diplomatic representatives here told me that the British Ambassador had said to him that he was not authorized to inform him of the subject of the Fuehrer's conversation with Mr. Henderson, but he could tell him this much, that the German proposal was obviously made with the object of separating Britain from her allies.

Wühlisch

No. 463 Memorandum from the British Government, Handed to the Fuehrer by the British Ambassador, August 28, 1939, at 10:30 P. M.

His Majesty's Government have received the message conveyed to them from the German Chancellor by His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin, and have considered it with the care which it demands.

1. They note the Chancellor's expression of his desire to make friendship the basis of the relations between Germany and the British Empire and they fully share this desire. They believe with him that if a complete and lasting understanding between the two countries could be established it would bring untold blessings to both peoples.

2. The Chancellor's message deals with two groups of questions: those which are the matters now in dispute between Germany and Poland and those affecting the ultimate relations of Germany and Great Britain. In connection with these last, His Majesty's Government observe that the German Chancellor has indicated certain proposals, which, subject to one condition, he would be prepared to make to the British Government for a general understanding. These proposals are, of course, stated in very general form and would require closer definition, but His Majesty's Government are fully prepared to take them, with some additions, as subjects for discussion and they would be ready, if the differences between

Germany and Poland are peacefully composed, to proceed as soon as practicable to such discussion with a sincere desire to reach agreement.

3. The condition which the German Chancellor lays down is that there must be a settlement of the differences between Germany and Poland. As to that, His Majesty's Government entirely agree. Everything, however, turns upon the nature of the settlement and the method by which it is to be reached. On these points, the importance of which cannot be absent from the Chancellor's mind, his message is silent, and His Majesty's Government feel compelled to point out that an understanding upon both of these is essential to achieving further progress. The German Government will be aware that His Majesty's Government have obligations to Poland by which they are bound and which they intend to honor. They could not, for any advantage offered to Great Britain, acquiesce in a settlement which put in jeopardy the independence of a State to whom they have given their guarantee.

4. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government a reasonable solution of the differences between Germany and Poland could and should be effected by agreement between the two countries on lines which would include the safeguarding of Poland's essential interest, and they recall that in his speech of last April 28 the German Chancellor recognized the importance of these interests to Poland.

But, as was stated by the Prime Minister in his letter to the German Chancellor of August 22, His Majesty's Government consider it essential for the success of the discussions which would precede the agreement that it should be understood beforehand that any settlement arrived at would be guaranteed by other Powers. His Majesty's Government would be ready if desired to make their contribution to the effective operation of such a guarantee.

In the view of His Majesty's Government it follows that the next step should be the initiation of direct discussions between the German and Polish Governments on a basis which would include the principles stated above, namely, the safeguarding of Poland's essential interests and the securing of the settlement by an international guarantee. They have already received a definite assurance from the Polish Government that they are prepared to enter into discussions on this basis, and His Majesty's Government hope the German Government would for their part also be willing to agree to this course.

If, as His Majesty's Government hope, such discussion led to agreement, the way would be open to the negotiation of that wider and more complete understanding between Great Britain and Germany which both countries desire.

5. His Majesty's Government agree with the German Chancellor that one of the principal dangers in the German-Polish situation arises from

the reports concerning the treatment of minorities. The present state of tension, with its concomitant frontier incidents, reports of maltreatment and inflammatory propaganda, is a constant danger to peace. It is manifestly a matter of the utmost urgency that all incidents of the kind should be promptly and rigidly suppressed and that unverified reports should not be allowed to circulate, in order that time may be afforded, without provocation on either side, for a full examination of the possibilities of settlement. His Majesty's Government are confident that both Governments concerned are fully alive to these considerations.

6. His Majesty's Government have said enough to make their own attitude plain in the particular matters at issue between Germany and Poland. They trust that the German Chancellor will not think that, because His Majesty's Government are scrupulous concerning their obligations to Poland, they are not anxious to use all their influence to assist the achievement of a solution which may commend itself both to Germany and to Poland.

That such a settlement should be achieved seems to His Majesty's Government essential, not only for reasons directly arising in regard to the settlement itself, but also because of the wider considerations of which the German Chancellor has spoken with such conviction.

7. It is unnecessary in the present reply to stress the advantage of a peaceful settlement over a decision to settle the questions at issue by force of arms. The results of a decision to use force have been clearly set out in the Prime Minister's letter to the Chancellor of the 22nd of August, and his Majesty's Government do not doubt that they are as fully recognized by the Chancellor as by themselves.

On the other hand, His Majesty's Government, noting with interest the German Chancellor's reference in the message now under consideration to a limitation of armaments, believe that, if a peaceful settlement can be obtained, the assistance of the world could confidently be anticipated for practical measures to enable the transition from preparation for war to the normal activities of peaceful trade to be safely and smoothly effected.

8. A just settlement of these questions between Germany and Poland may open the way to world peace. Failure to reach it would ruin the hopes of better understanding between Germany and Great Britain, would bring the two countries into conflict, and might well plunge the whole world into war. Such an outcome would be a calamity without parallel in history.

No. 464 The Fuehrer's Reply to the British Government, Handed to the British Ambassador, August 29, 1939, at 6:45 P. M.

(Translation)

The British Ambassador in Berlin has informed the British Government of certain suggestions which I felt it incumbent upon me to put forward, in order to (1) express once more the desire of the German Government for sincere Anglo-German understanding, co-operation and friendship; (2) leave no room for doubt that such an understanding cannot be purchased at the expense of Germany's renunciation of her vital interests or even by the sacrifice of claims based just as much on general human rights as on the national dignity and honor of our nation.

It was with satisfaction that the German Government learned from the written reply of the British Government and the verbal declarations of the British Ambassador that the British Government for their part are also prepared to improve Anglo-German relations and to develop and to foster these in the spirit of the German suggestions.

The British Government are likewise convinced that the removal of the tension between Germany and Poland, which has become intolerable, is indispensable to the realization of this hope.

Since the autumn of 1938, and for the last time in March, 1939, verbal and written proposals have been submitted to the Polish Government, which, in consideration of the friendship then existing between Germany and Poland, might have led to a settlement of the questions under dispute which would have been acceptable to both parties. The British Government are aware that the Polish Government saw fit to reject these proposals finally in March of this year. At the same time the Polish Government made their rejection a pretext or an occasion for the adoption of military measures which have since then been continued on an ever-increasing scale. Poland had, in fact, mobilized as early as the middle of last month. In connection with the mobilization, numerous incidents took place in the Free City of Danzig at the instigation of the Polish authorities, and demands of a more or less threatening character amounting to an ultimatum were addressed to the Free City of Danzig. The closing of the frontier, which was at first in the nature of a customs measure, was afterwards carried out on military lines and was extended to affect traffic with the object of bringing about the political disintegration and the economic ruin of this German community.

Furthermore, the large group of Germans living in Poland was subjected to atrocious and barbarous ill-treatment and to other forms of persecution which resulted in some cases in the death by violence of many Germans domiciled there, or in their deportation under the most cruel circumstances. Such a situation is intolerable for a Great Power and has now forced Germany after months of inactive observation to undertake

the necessary steps for the protection of her rightful interests. The German Government can only most seriously assure the British Government that a state of affairs has now been reached for which continued acquiescence or even inactive observation is no longer possible.

The demands of the German Government imply a revision of the Treaty of Versailles in this area, a fact which was recognized as necessary from the very outset; they constitute the return of Danzig and the Polish Corridor to Germany and the safeguarding of the German minorities domiciled in those territories remaining in Polish possession.

The German Government note with satisfaction that the British Government are also convinced on principle that some solution must be found for the state of affairs which has now developed. They further consider they may assume that the British Government entertain no doubt on the fact that this is a state of affairs which can no longer be remedied in a matter of days or even weeks but for which perhaps only a few hours yet remain. For in view of the disorganized state of Poland we must at any moment be prepared for the possibility of events occurring which Germany could not tolerate.

If the British Government still believe that these grave differences can be solved by direct negotiations, the German Government on their part regret at the outset that they are unable to share such an opinion. They have already tried to open up a way for peaceful negotiations of this nature, without meeting with the support of the Polish Government, and only seeing their efforts rejected by the abrupt initiation of measures of a military character in accordance with the general development indicated above.

There are two factors which the British Government consider important: (1) to remove most speedily the imminent danger of a conflagration by means of direct negotiations, and (2) to give the necessary economic and political safeguards by means of international guarantees for the future existence of the remaining Polish State.

To that, the German Government desire to make the following statement:

Despite their sceptical judgment of the prospects of such direct negotiations, the German Government are nevertheless prepared to accept the English proposal, and to enter into direct discussions. They do so solely because—as already emphasized—the written communication received from the British Government gives them the impression that the latter also desire a friendly agreement along the lines indicated to Ambassador Henderson. The German Government desire in this way to give to the British Government and to the British people a proof of the sincerity of the German intention of arriving at a state of permanent friendship with Great Britain.

The German Government nevertheless feel bound to point out to the British Government that in the case of a reorganization of the territorial

conditions in Poland, the German Government are no longer in a position to take upon themselves any guarantees, or to participate in any guarantees, without the co-operation of the U. S. S. R.

Moreover, the German Government never had the intention, in their proposals, of attacking vital Polish interests or of questioning the existence of an independent Polish State. Under these conditions, the German Government therefore agree to accept the proposed intermediation of the British Government to send to Berlin a Polish representative invested with plenipotentiary powers. They expect his arrival on Wednesday, August 30, 1939.

The German Government will immediately draft the proposals for a solution acceptable to them, and, if possible, will make such proposals available for the British Government also before the Polish negotiator arrives.

No. 465 The German Chargé d'Affaires in Warsaw to the Foreign Office

Telephone Message, August 30, 1939, 5:30 P. M.

(Translation)

Since an hour ago, notices ordering a general mobilization have been posted in Poland. The first day of mobilization is August 31; everybody in possession of a white mobilization card must report at once.

No. 466 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with the British Ambassador, at Midnight, August 30, 1939

(Translation)

Memorandum of Dr. Schmidt, Minister Plenipotentiary

Henderson delivered the Memorandum of the British Government given in the Appendix.* He added that he had been instructed to discuss two additional points orally.

Complete restraint was only to be expected from the Polish Government if the German Government adopted the same attitude on their side of the frontier and if no provocation by the German minority in Poland took place. Reports were current to the effect that the Germans in Poland committed acts of sabotage which would justify the adoption of the most severe counter-measures by the Polish Government. The German Foreign Minister objected strongly to this remark. Germany, he said, was aware

* Cf. Appendix I.

only of acts of provocation committed by the Poles, but Polish propaganda appeared to have done its work with the British Government. The most outrageous acts of sabotage were committed by the Poles. He refused to discuss this matter at all with the British Government.

Sir Nevile Henderson's further instructions referred to the German Government's reply of the previous day, in which the German Government had declared themselves prepared to establish direct contact with Poland if the Polish Government would immediately despatch a plenipotentiary. The British Government were not in a position to advise the Polish Government to accept this procedure. They suggested that the German Government should adopt the normal diplomatic way, i.e. hand their proposals to the Polish Ambassador in order to set matters going and make it possible for the Polish Ambassador to co-operate with his Government in preparing for direct German-Polish negotiations. If the German Government would also communicate these proposals to the British Government and the latter were of the opinion that the proposals constituted a reasonable basis for a settlement of the problems to be discussed, they would use their influence in Warsaw to achieve a settlement.

Referring to the last paragraph of the German reply of the previous day, Henderson asked whether the German proposals were ready, and whether these proposals could be handed over to him.

The German Foreign Minister replied, first, that British intervention had so far led to only one tangible result, namely, general mobilization on the part of Poland; and, second, that Germany had been counting on the arrival of a Polish representative that day. This had not constituted an ultimatum, as the British Ambassador had erroneously assumed, but, as the Fuehrer had already explained on the previous day, a practical proposal dictated by prevailing conditions. By midnight Germany had received no answer from Poland. The question of a possible proposal therefore no longer existed. In order to show, however, what proposals Germany had intended to make if the Polish representative had come, the Foreign Minister read aloud the German proposals contained in the Appendix,* and explained them in detail.

Henderson replied that the statement of the Foreign Minister, that in consequence of the non-arrival of the Polish representative by midnight on Wednesday the proposals which the German Government had originally intended to make no longer held good, seemed to confirm his interpretation of the proposal as an ultimatum.

The German Foreign Minister once more emphatically opposed this conception, and referred to the statement made by the Fuehrer on the previous day, that this urgency was the outcome of the fact that two fully mobilized armies were standing face to face within firing distance of each other and that at any moment some incident might lead to serious conflict.

* Cf. Appendix II.

In conclusion, Henderson suggested that the German Foreign Minister should ask the Polish Ambassador to call on him and hand him the German proposals.

The German Foreign Minister rejected this suggested procedure as far as he personally was concerned, and concluded the conversation by saying that all decisions must rest with the Fuehrer.

Schmidt

Appendix I

Memorandum from the British Government, Handed to the German Foreign Minister by the British Ambassador, at Midnight, August 30, 1939

1. His Majesty's Government appreciate the friendly reference in the Declaration contained in the reply of the German Government to the latter's desire for an Anglo-German understanding and to their statement of the influence which this consideration has exercised upon their policy.

2. His Majesty's Government repeat that they reciprocate the German Government's desire for improved relations, but it will be recognized that they could not sacrifice the interests of other friends in order to obtain that improvement. They fully understand that the German Government cannot sacrifice Germany's vital interests, but the Polish Government are in the same position and His Majesty's Government believe that the vital interests of the two countries are not incompatible.

3. His Majesty's Government note that the German Government accept the British proposal and are prepared to enter into direct discussions with the Polish Government.

4. His Majesty's Government understand that the German Government accept in principle the condition that any settlement should be made the subject of an international guarantee. The question of who shall participate in this guarantee will have to be discussed further, and His Majesty's Government hope that to avoid loss of time the German Government will take immediate steps to obtain the assent of the U. S. S. R., whose participation in the Guarantee His Majesty's Government have always assumed.

5. His Majesty's Government also note that the German Government accept the position of the British Government as to Poland's vital interests and independence.

6. His Majesty's Government must make an express reservation in regard to the statement of the particular demands put forward by the German Government in an earlier passage in their reply. They under-

stand that the German Government are drawing up proposals for a solution. No doubt these proposals will be fully examined during the discussions. It can then be determined how far they are compatible with the essential conditions which His Majesty's Government have stated and which in principle the German Government have expressed their willingness to accept.

7. His Majesty's Government are at once informing the Polish Government of the German Government's reply. The method of contact and arrangements for discussions must obviously be agreed with all urgency between the German and Polish Governments, but in His Majesty's Government's view it would be impracticable to establish contact so early as today.

8. His Majesty's Government fully recognize the need for speed in the initiation of discussion, and they share the apprehensions of the Chancellor arising from the proximity of two mobilized armies standing face to face. They would accordingly most strongly urge that both parties should undertake that, during the negotiations, no aggressive military movements will take place. His Majesty's Government feel confident that they could obtain such an undertaking from the Polish Government if the German Government would give similar assurances.

9. Further His Majesty's Government would suggest that a temporary *modus vivendi* might be arranged for Danzig, which might prevent the occurrence of incidents tending to render German-Polish relations more difficult.

Berlin, August 30, 1939.

Appendix II

Proposal for a Settlement of the Problem of Danzig and the Polish Corridor and of the German-Polish Minorities Question

(Translation)

The situation between the German Reich and Poland is at the present time such that any further incident may lead to an outbreak of hostilities between the military forces of the two countries, which have already taken up their positions on their respective sides of the frontier. Any peaceful solution of the problem must be of such a nature that the events which originally brought about this state of affairs cannot be repeated on another occasion, thus causing a state of tension not only in Eastern Europe but also elsewhere.

The causes of this development are to be found in (1) the intolerable demarcation of the frontiers as dictated in the Treaty of Versailles,

(2) the intolerable treatment of the minority in the territories cut off from the Reich.

In putting forward these proposals, the German Government are attempting to find a final solution, putting an end to the intolerable situation arising from the present demarcation of frontiers, securing to both parties their vital lines of communication, eliminating as far as possible the problem of the minorities and, in so far as this should prove impossible, rendering the fate of the minorities bearable by effectively guaranteeing their rights.

The German Government feel convinced that it is indispensable that economic and personal damage inflicted since 1918 should be investigated, and full compensation made therefore. Of course, the German Government regard this obligation as binding upon both parties.

The above considerations give rise to the following concrete proposals:

1. By reason of its purely German character and the unanimous will of its population, the Free City of Danzig shall be returned forthwith to the German Reich.

2. The territory known as the Polish Corridor, that is to say, the territory bounded by the Baltic Sea and a line running from Marienwerder to Graudenz, Kulm, Bromberg, (including these towns), and then in a westerly direction towards Schönlanke, shall itself decide whether it shall become part of the German Reich or remain with Poland.

3. For that purpose, a plebiscite shall be held in this territory. All Germans who were domiciled in this area on January 1, 1918, or who were born there on or before that day, and also all Poles, Cassubians, etc., who were domiciled in this area on that day or who were born there on or before the above-mentioned date, shall be entitled to vote. Germans who have been expelled from this territory shall return for the purpose of registering their votes.

   In order to ensure an impartial plebiscite and to guarantee that the necessary and extensive preparations for the plebiscite shall be carried out correctly, an International Commission like the one formed in connection with the Saar plebiscite, and consisting of members appointed by the four Great Powers, Italy, the U. S. S. R., France and Great Britain, shall be formed immediately, and placed in charge of this territory. This commission shall exercise sovereign rights throughout the territory. To that end, the territory shall be evacuated by the Polish military forces, by the Polish police and by the Polish authorities within the shortest possible time to be agreed upon.

4. The Polish port of Gdynia to the extent of the Polish settlement is not included in this area, but, as a matter of principle, is recognized as Polish territory.

   The details of the boundaries of this Polish port shall be decided on by Germany and Poland, and if necessary established by an International Court of Arbitration.

5. In order to allow for ample time for the necessary and extensive preparations for the carrying out of an impartial plebiscite, this plebiscite shall not take place before a period of twelve months has elapsed.

6. In order that during that period, Germany's lines of communication with East Prussia and Poland's access to the sea may be unrestrictedly ensured, certain roads and railway lines shall be determined, in order to facilitate unobstructed transit. In this connection only such taxes may be levied as are necessary for the upkeep of the lines of communication and for the carrying out of transport.

7. The allocation of this territory shall be decided on by the absolute majority of the votes cast.

8. In order to secure, after the plebiscite (irrespective of the result thereof), Germany's unrestricted communication with the province of Danzig—East Prussia, and Poland's access to the sea, Germany shall, in case the territory be returned to Poland as a result of the plebiscite, be given an extraterritorial traffic zone running from, say, Bütow to Danzig or Dirschau, for the purpose of building a German motor highway (*Reichsautobahn*) and also a four-track railway line. The construction of the motor road and of the railway shall be carried out in such a manner that Polish lines of communication are not affected thereby, i. e., they are to be overbridged or underbridged. This zone shall be one kilometer in width and shall be German territory.

   Should the result of the plebiscite be in favor of Germany, Poland shall have the same rights as Germany would have had, to build an exterritorial road and railway connection in order to secure her free and unrestricted access to her port of Gdynia.

9. In the event of the Polish Corridor being returned to the Reich, the latter declares herself prepared to arrange with Poland for an exchange of population, insofar as conditions in the Corridor lend themselves to such an exchange.

10. Any special rights claimed by Poland within the port of Danzig shall be negotiated on a parity basis in exchange for equal rights for Germany at the Port of Gdynia.

11. In order to avoid any sense of menace or danger on either side, Danzig and Gdynia shall henceforth have a purely commercial character; i. e., neither of these places shall be provided with means of military defense or fortifications.

12. The Peninsula of Hela, which according to the result of the plebiscite would be allocated either to Poland or to Germany, shall also be demilitarized in any case.

13. The German Government, having most serious complaints to make about the treatment of the minority by the Poles, and the Polish Government, considering themselves entitled to raise complaints against Germany, agree to investigate into all complaints about economic and personal damage, as well as other acts of terrorism.

    Germany and Poland bind themselves to indemnify the minorities on either side for any economic damages and other wrongs inflicted upon them since 1918; and/or to revoke all expropriations or otherwise to completely indemnify the respective person or persons for these and other encroachments upon economic life.

14. In order to free the Germans remaining in Poland, as well as the Poles remaining in Germany, from the feeling of being deprived of the benefits of international law, and above all to afford them the certainty of their not being made to take part in actions and in furnishing services of a kind not compatible with their national convictions, Germany and Poland mutually agree to safeguard the rights of their respective minorities by most comprehensive and binding agreements for the purpose of warranting these minorities the preservation, free development and cultivation of their national customs, habits and traditions, to grant them in particular and for that purpose the form of organization considered necessary by them. Both parties undertake not to draft the members of the minority into military service.

15. In case of an agreement being reached on the basis of these proposals, Germany and Poland declare themselves prepared immediately to order and carry out the demobilization of their respective armed forces.

16. Any additional measures required to hasten the carrying through of the above agreement shall be mutually agreed upon between Germany and Poland.

No. 467 The State Secretary at the Foreign Office to the German Diplomatic Representatives

Circular by Telegraph

Berlin, August 31, 1939

Our expectations that, in accordance with our proposal to Warsaw made through medium of British Government, a Polish plenipotentiary would be despatched forthwith to begin direct German-Polish negotiations have not been realized. On the contrary, Poland, as is now known, ordered general mobilization yesterday. Under these circumstances the situation has become most critically acute.

Weizsäcker

No. 468 Official German Communiqué, August 31, 1939, at 9 P. M.

(Translation)

In a note dated August 28, 1939, addressed to the German Government, the British Government declared themselves prepared to offer their services as intermediaries in arranging direct negotiations between Germany and Poland for the settlement of the problems under dispute. In this note they left no room for doubt that in view of the continued incidents and the general state of tension throughout Europe they also were aware of the urgency of such action.

In spite of their scepticism regarding the willingness of the Polish Government to reach any agreement, the German Government, in a reply dated August 29, 1939, declared themselves prepared in the interests of peace to accept British intermediation or suggestions. Taking into account all the circumstances prevailing at the moment they considered it necessary to point out in their reply that, if the danger of catastrophe is to be avoided at all, quick and immediate action is indispensable. The German Government have therefore declared themselves willing to receive a delegate appointed by the Polish Government by the evening of August 30, 1939, provided that this delegate should be invested with full power not only to take part in discussions but to negotiate and to make a final decision.

The German Government have further expressed the hope that they would be able to submit to the British Government the gist of the proposed agreement before the arrival of the Polish Delegate in Berlin.

Instead of a declaration regarding the arrival of an authorized Polish representative the German Government, in reply to their readiness to negotiate, received firstly the news of the Polish mobilization, and it was only towards midnight on August 30, 1939, that they received the assur-

ance by Britain, couched in more general terms, that she would use her influence to arrange for the opening of negotiations.

Owing to the non-arrival of the Polish delegate who was expected by the German Government, there no longer existed the primary condition for informing the British Government, who had themselves recommended direct negotiations between Germany and Poland, of the position taken by the Reich as to the basis for such negotiations. Nevertheless, Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop acquainted the British Ambassador, when the latter handed over the last British note, with the exact wording of the German proposals as prepared for the expected arrival of the Polish plenipotentiary.

Under these circumstances the German Government considered that they had every right to expect that, at least subsequently to this, the nomination of a Polish delegate would immediately take place. It was clearly too much to expect of the German Government that they should continue not only to reiterate their willingness to enter upon such negotiations, but even to sit and wait and allow themselves to be put off by the Polish side with feeble subterfuges and empty declarations.

In the meantime a *démarche* by the Polish Ambassador has again shown that not even he is authorized to enter upon any discussion whatsoever, much less to negotiate.

Thus the Fuehrer and the German Government have now waited for two days in vain for the arrival of an authorized Polish delegate.

Under these circumstances the German Government cannot but regard their proposals as having been once more virtually rejected, although they are of the opinion that in the form in which they were also communicated to the British Government, they were formulated in a spirit of more than goodwill and fairness, and could have been accepted.

The Government of the Reich consider it appropriate to inform the public of the proposed basis for negotiation as communicated to the British Ambassador by Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop.*

No. 469 Announcement by the Polish Broadcasting Station at Warsaw, August 31, 1939, at 11 P. M.

(Translation)

The publication of the official German *communiqué* today has clearly revealed the aims and intentions of German policy. It proves the undisguised aggressive intentions of Germany towards Poland. The conditions under which the Third Reich is prepared to negotiate with Poland are: Danzig must immediately return to the Reich; Pomorze, together with the cities of Bromberg and Graudenz, are to be subjected to a plebiscite, for which all Germans who left that territory for any reason whatsoever

* In the text of the official German Communiqué there followed here the proposal printed above under No. 466, Appendix II.

since the year 1918 may return; the Polish military forces and the police force shall be evacuated from Pomorze; the police force of England, France, Italy and the U. S. S. R. will be placed in charge of the territory; the plebiscite is to take place after twelve months have elapsed; the territory of the Hela Peninsula will also be included in the plebiscite; Gdynia as a Polish town is excluded; irrespective of the result of the plebiscite an exterritorial road one kilometre wide is to be constructed. . . . . .

The German News Agency announces that the time allowed for the acceptance of these conditions expired yesterday. Germany has waited in vain for a Polish delegate. The answer given was the military orders issued by the Polish Government.

Words can now no longer veil the aggressive plans of the new Huns. Germany is aiming at the domination of Europe and is cancelling the rights of nations with as yet unprecedented cynicism. This impudent proposal shows clearly how necessary were the military orders given by the Polish Government.

No. 470 List of Officially Reported Serious Frontier Incidents on the German-Polish Frontier Between August 25 and 31, 1939, Compiled by an Official of the Political Department of the German Foreign Office

(Translation)

Berlin, September 1, 1939

August 25

1. Report of the State Police Station at Elbing.

   Towards 10 p. m. on the farm of the peasant Reinhard Briese, situated directly on the German-Polish frontier at Scharschau, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, a stable burned down. Near the scene of the fire an incendiary bomb of Polish origin was found.

2. Report of the State Police Station at Elbing.

   Towards 11 p. m. the property of Martha Zerkowski, a widow, of Schönerswalde, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, situated directly on the German-Polish frontier, was destroyed by arson committed by men who had come from Poland.

3. Report from the State Police Station at Elbing.

   On the night of August 25, the property of woodcutter Schlegel of Neukrug, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, situated directly

on the German-Polish frontier, was destroyed by arson committed by men who had come from Poland.

4. Report from the State Police Station at Elbing.

   On the night of August 25, the forester's house at Dietrichswalde, district of Marienwerder, situated near the German-Polish frontier, burned down completely as a result of arson committed by men who had come from Poland.

5. Report from the State Police Station at Elbing.

   On the night of August 25, the property of peasant Gehrke, of Niederzehren, district of Marienwerder, situated near the German-Polish frontier, was destroyed by arson committed by men who had come from Poland.

6. Report from the State Police Station at Elbing.

   On the night of August 25, signalman's house No. 34 on the railway line Deutsch-Eylau—Alt-Eiche—Soldau was destroyed by a bomb.

7. Report from the State Police Station at Köslin.

   On the night of August 25, a barn belonging to miller Domke, at Somminer-Mühle, district of Bütow, burned down. Investigation of the scene showed that fire was caused by a bomb with an electric time-fuse. The property was situated directly on the German-Polish frontier.

8. Report of the President of the Provincial Revenue Office, East Prussia.

   On the night of August 25, Polish soldiers blew up and completely destroyed such parts of the highway bridge and the railway bridge Zandersfelde-Neuliebenau as were on German territory.

August 26

1. Report of the Head Customs House, Neidenburg.

   At 12:45 a. m. the sentry in front of the customs house at Wetzhausen noticed and challenged a Polish soldier who was moving towards the custom-house from the wood opposite. The soldier took to flight and was apparently wounded by two shots.

   Afterwards it was ascertained that the soldier belonged to a group of six Polish soldiers who had crossed the German-Polish frontier at that spot.

2. Report of the State Police Station at Elbing.

   Towards 3 p. m. the dwelling and business houses belonging to the Werner and Scheffler families at Neukrug, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, situated near the German-Polish frontier,

burned down to their foundations as a result of arson. It was ascertained that the perpetrators were from Poland.

3. Report of the Head Customs House at Lauenburg.

   At 11 p. m. Tatolinski, a minority German of Seelau, which lies opposite the customs post at Gross Seelnow, escaped across the frontier after his farm had been set on fire by a Polish gang. The Poles fired several shots at him across the frontier.

4. Report of the Head Customs House at Meseritz.

   Minority German fugitives who on August 26 crossed the frontier near Betsche-Süd, were repeatedly shot at by Polish frontier guards, after they had already concealed themselves in a field of maize on German soil.

August 27

1. Report of the State Police Station at Elbing.

   In the early hours a fire destroyed the farm of the peasant Guzinski of Klein Heyde, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, near the German-Polish frontier. It was ascertained that the Polish incendiaries had come across the frontier.

2. Report from the State Police Station at Elbing.

   Towards 3:15 a. m. a Polish gang, consisting of about 15 men armed with rifles, attacked the railway halt and the saw-mills at Alt-Eiche, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia. After the Poles had fired several shots, they were driven off by a detachment of the German frontier guard.

3. Report of the Customs House at Lindenhorst.

   Towards 4 a. m. a sentry of the frontier guard observed six Polish soldiers moving in the direction of frontier stone No. 127. Grouping themselves in threes, they then crossed the German frontier and proceeded in the direction of the road to Neumittelwalde-Schönstein. About 4:25 a. m. the detachment leader of the frontier guard sighted a Polish soldier crawling along the ground. He thereupon fired four shots, and the Poles withdrew.

4. Report of the Head Customs House at Schneidemühl.

   Towards 10:30 a. m. in the region of Vorwerk-Dreilinden, within about 300 metres this side of the frontier, three German frontier guard officers, Captain Täschner, Lieutenant Sebulka and Lieutenant Dinger, were fired at from across the Polish frontier.

5. Report of the Head Customs House at Neidenburg.

   Towards 5 p. m., a patrol of the branch Customs House at Flannberg, stood guard near point 128, situated at a distance

of about 100 metres from the frontier-river Orzyc on the edge of a wood to the west of Flannberg. From the Polish side about 20 shots were suddenly fired, which fell on German territory. It was found out later on that these shots were fired by a Polish frontier patrol who, under the command of a Polish officer, had approached the German frontier and opened fire upon a military sentry. It was further ascertained that the Poles had thrown four egg hand-grenades.

6. Report of the Head Customs House at Kreuzberg.

   At about 8:15 p. m. Customs House Assistant Scheffler was fired on by Poles seven or eight times near Reidenwalde.

7. Report of the President of the Provincial Revenue Office, East Prussia.

   Towards 9:45 p. m. the Customs Guard Will, about to ride away on his bicycle from an estate close to the frontier, was fired on several times by Polish frontier guards stationed at Kleinfelde near Mewe.

August 28

1. Report of the State Police Station at Elbing.

   Towards 12:30 a. m. a German guard posted near the railway bridge Deutsch-Eylan (Neumark) sighted several Polish soldiers on German territory. When the guard opened fire, the Poles disappeared in the woods while replying to the fire.

2. Report of the State Police Station at Oppeln.

   Towards 1 a. m., on the avenue leading from Ratibor to Hohenbirken, East Upper Silesia, a German anti-aircraft detachment sighted Polish troops on the march who had crossed over into German territory for a distance of about 150 metres. The anti-aircraft detachment thereupon opened fire, and the Polish troops withdrew.

3. Report of the Head Customs House at Beuthen.

   Towards 1 a. m. several shots were fired from a Polish machine gun. The shots fell close to a machine gun detachment of the frontier guard stationed at the slag heap near the athletic field of the Borsigwerk.

4. Report of the State Police Station at Elbing.

   Towards 1:45 a. m. the guard at Alt-Eiche, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, was attacked by Polish regulars. The Poles first attacked a group posted at the frontier crossing who thereupon retired as far as the railway station of Alt-Eiche. At that moment about 10 Polish soldiers came from another direction

and began to rush at them. The German detachment thereupon moved into position and opened fire. The Poles, who deployed, fired also. Lance-Corporal Grutzinski of Hansdorf fell fatally wounded, and another German soldier was wounded in the shoulder. The Polish soldiers then withdrew to Polish territory.

5. Report of the Head Customs House at Gleiwitz.

Towards 10:45 p. m. the German customs officials Fleische and Quenzel, stationed at the barrier near the Customs House at Neuberstein, were fired on from the Polish side with a machine gun and rifles. The Poles ceased fire only after an encounter with German frontier guards lasting 20 minutes.

August 29

1. Report of the State Police Station at Ebling.

In the early hours of the morning Polish soldiers crossed over into German territory near the saw mills at Alt-Eiche. They were driven back by the German frontier guard.

2. Report of the State Police Station at Köslin.

In the early morning soldiers of the Polish frontier guard made an armed attack on the German Customs House near the railway station of Sonnenwalde. In the defense a German District Customs Commissioner and a German frontier employee were wounded.

3. Report of the State Police Station at Breslau.

About 1:40 p. m. the customs assistant Dippe was fired on with a rifle by a Polish frontier sentry in a little wood near Neu-Vorberg close to the road from Lesten to Tharlang.

4. Report of the Head Customs House at Beuthen.

Towards 9:45 p. m. shots falling on German territory were fired repeatedly by Polish soldiers in the vicinity of Customs House 3 at Beuthen. First, 20 to 30 pistol shots were fired across the road passing the Customs House in the direction of the pit yard of the Beuthen mine, and fell about ten metres in front of the third group of a detachment of the 8th Frontier Guard Company. There followed 10 to 15 rifle shots, and immediately afterwards a further four or five shots from an automatic pistol. The Germans did not reply to the fire.

5. Report of the Head Customs House at Gleiwitz.

Towards 11:50 p. m. a Polish formation opened violent fire upon German customs officials and frontier guards on German soil near the Customs House at Neubersteich. Two light machine-

guns which had been placed in position on German territory were unmistakably ascertained, also a heavy machine-gun. After a fight lasting for some time the Poles ceased fire at 1:15 a. m.

August 30

1. Report of the State Police Station at Elbing.

   Towards 12:30 a. m. the Customs House at Neukrug, district of Rosenberg, West Prussia, was attacked from the woods by Polish regulars. The Poles obviously intended to attack the men stationed there from the rear. Behind a garage not very far away they had placed a light machine-gun in position. When the Poles were shot at by the German guard from a room in the upper story of the Customs House building, the Polish machine-gun position was moved into dense undergrowth, which again was immediately taken under fire. The fight lasted until about 5 a. m. A member of the German guard was fatally wounded. The Customs House had several window-panes smashed and had its telephone wiring destroyed.

2. Report of the State Police Station at Elbing.

   Towards 12:45 a. m. near the saw-mills at Alt-Eichen, the German frontier guard cited three or four Polish soldiers as they tried to creep up to the mill. They were driven back by the frontier guard.

3. Report of the State Police Station at Breslau.

   Towards 7 a. m. farmer Ferdinand Braun of Golgas, district of Militsch, was working in the field on the German territory about 100 metres from frontier stone 233. He was suddenly fired on by a Polish soldier with a pistol, but remained unhurt.

4. Report of the President of the Provincial Revenue Officer at Troppau.

   At 3:05 a. m. an airplane—apparently a German reconnaissance plane—flying over German territory was shot at from Polish territory by anti-aircraft artillery firing from the direction of Oderberg and Wurbitz. Shrapnel pieces were found and kept as evidence.

August 31

1. Report of the State Police Station at Elbing.

   Towards 1 a. m. the Customs House at Neukrug was attacked by about 25 Polish soldiers armed with a light machine-gun. They tried to surround the customs building. The attackers were beaten back.

2. Report of the Head Customs at Gleiwitz.

   Towards 2 a. m. an attack was made by Poles on the German

frontier guard on duty at the Customs House at Neubersteich. An attack of the Poles on the Customs House was prevented by German fire.

3. Report of the District Customs Commissioner at Deutsch-Eylau.

   Towards 3 a. m. near Scharschau on German territory an attack was made by Polish troops on a patrol of the German frontier guard. When reinforcements arrived and the fire was answered, the Poles withdrew.

4. Report of the Chief Constable at Gleiwitz.

   Towards 8 p. m. the German Broadcasting Station at Gleiwitz was attacked by a troop of Polish insurgents and temporarily occupied. The insurgents were driven off by German frontier police officers. One of the insurgents was fatally injured.

5. Report of the President of the Provincial Revenue Office at Troppau.

   On the night of August 31 the Customs House at Hoflinden was attacked by Polish insurgents and temporarily occupied. By a counter-attack on the part of an S. S. posse the insurgents were driven off.

6. Report of the State Police Station at Elbing.

   About 12:30 a. m. the Customs House at Neukrug was attacked by 30 Polish soldiers armed with machine guns and rifles. The attack was repulsed by the German field guard.

7. Report of the State Police Station at Liegnitz.

   On the night of August 31 a German customs official near Pfalzdorf, district of Grünberg, at a distance of about 75 metres from the Polish frontier, was fatally injured by Polish troops.

8. Report of the State Police Station at Liegnitz.

   On the night of August 31 near Röhrsdorf in the district of Fraustadt, a German customs official while on duty was shot dead by Polish troops, another was seriously injured.

9. Report of the State Police Station at Liégnitz.

   On the night of August 31, without any provocation, the Poles made an armed attack on the German Customs House at Pfalzdorf in the district of Grünberg.

10. Report of the State Police Station at Liegnitz.

    On the night of August 31 the German Customs House at Geyersdorf was temporarily occupied by Polish insurgents, who caused considerable damage.

11. Report of the State Police Station at Brünn.

On the night of August 31 the Polish frontier guard attacked the German Customs House at Hruschau with a machine-gun. The Germans replied to the fire. The Poles took to flight.

Schliep

No. 471 Speech by the Fuehrer to the Reichstag, September 1, 1939

(Translation)

Members of the German Reichstag:

For months we have been tormented by a problem once wished upon us by the dictated Treaty of Versailles and which has now assumed such a character as to become utterly intolerable. Danzig was and is a German city. The Corridor was and is German. All these districts owe their cultural development exclusively to the German people, without whom absolute barbarism would prevail in these eastern tracts of country. Danzig was separated from us. The Corridor was annexed by Poland. The German minorities living there were ill-treated in the most appalling manner. More than a million persons with German blood in their veins were compelled to leave their homes as early as 1919/1920. Here, as always, I have attempted to change this intolerable state of affairs by means of peaceful proposals for a revision. It is a lie when the world alleges that we always used pressure in attempting to carry out any revision. There was ample opportunity for fifteen years before National Socialism assumed power to carry through revisions by means of a peaceful understanding. This was not done. I myself then took the initiative in every single case, not only once, but many times, to bring forward proposals for the revision of absolutely intolerable conditions.

As you know, all these proposals were rejected. I need not enumerate them in detail: proposals for a limitation of armaments, if necessary even for the abolition of armaments, proposals for restrictions on methods of warfare, proposals for eliminating methods of modern warfare, which, in my opinion, are scarcely compatible with international law. You know the proposals which I made as to the necessity of restoring German sovereign rights in certain territories of the Reich, those countless attempts I made to bring about a peaceful solution of the Austrian problem and, later on, of the Sudetenland, Bohemia and Moravia. It was all in vain. One thing, however, is impossible: to demand that a peaceful revision should be made of an intolerable state of affairs —and then obstinately refuse such a peaceful revision. It is equally impossible to assert that in such a situation to act on one's own initiative in making a revision is to violate a law. For us Germans the dictated

Treaty of Versailles is not a law. It will not do to blackmail a person at the point of a pistol with the threat of starvation for millions of people into signing a document and afterwards proclaim that this document with its forced signature was a solemn law.

In the case of Danzig and the Corridor I have again tried to solve the problems by proposing peaceful discussions. One thing was obvious: they had to be solved. That the date of the solution may perhaps be of little interest to the Western Powers is conceivable. But this date is not a matter of indifference to us. First and foremost, however, it was not and could not be a matter of indifference to the suffering victims. In conversations with Polish statesmen, I have discussed the ideas which you have heard me express here in my last speech to the Reichstag. No one can maintain that this was an unjust procedure or even unreasonable pressure.

I then had the German proposals clearly formulated and I feel bound to repeat once more that nothing could be fairer or more modest than those proposals submitted by me. And I now wish to declare to the whole world that I, and I alone, was in a position to make such proposals. For I know quite definitely that I was thereby acting contrary to the opinion of millions of Germans.

Those proposals were rejected. But more than that, they were replied to by mobilization, by increased terrorism, by intensified pressure on the German minorities in those areas, and by a gradual economic and political strangulation of the Free City of Danzig, which during the past few weeks found its expression in military measures and traffic restrictions. Poland virtually began a war against the Free City of Danzig. Furthermore she was not prepared to settle the problem of the Corridor in a fair manner satisfying the interests of both parties. And lastly, Poland has never thought of fulfilling her obligations with regard to the minorities. In this connection I feel it necessary to state that Germany has fulfilled her obligations in this respect. Minorities domiciled in Germany are not subject to persecution. Let any Frenchman get up and declare that French citizens living in the Saar territory are oppressed, ill-treated or deprived of their rights. No one can make such an assertion.

For four months I have watched these developments without taking action but not without issuing repeated warnings. Recently I have made these warnings more and more emphatic. Over three weeks ago the Polish Ambassador was, at my request, informed that if Poland persisted in sending further notes in the nature of an ultimatum to Danzig and in further oppressing the German minorities, or if attempts were made to bring about the economic ruin of Danzig by means of customs restrictions, Germany would no longer stand aside and remain inactive. I have left no room for doubt that in this respect the Germany of today is not to be confused with post-war Germany.

Attempts have been made to justify the action against the German minorities by declaring that they had given provocation. I am at a loss

to know what "provocation" those women and children are supposed to have given who have been ill-treated and deported, or what was the nature of the provocation given by all those who were tortured in the most inhuman and sadistic fashion before they were finally put to death. One thing, however, I do know: there is not one single Great Power possessed of a feeling of honor, which would countenance such conditions for any length of time.

In spite of all I have made one last attempt. Although possessed of the innermost conviction that the Polish Government—perhaps also owing to their dependence on a now unrestrained wild soldiery—are not in earnest as regards a real understanding, I nevertheless accepted a proposal of mediation submitted by the British Government. The latter proposed not to carry on any negotiations themselves, but assured me of their establishing a direct connection between Poland and Germany for the purpose of thus facilitating direct discussions once more.

I must here state the following: I accepted that proposal. For these discussions I had drawn up the fundamentals which are known to you. And then I and my Government sat expectantly for two whole days in order to find out whether the Polish Government saw fit finally to dispatch an authorized representative or not. Up to last night the Polish Government did not dispatch an authorized representative, but informed us by their Ambassador that at present they were considering the question whether and to what extent they might be able to accept the British proposals; they would inform Britain of the result.

Members of the Reichstag, if such treatment could be meted out to the German Reich and its Head, and if the German Reich and its Head were to submit to such treatment, the German nation would not deserve a better fate than to vanish from the political arena. My love of peace and my endless patience must not be mistaken for weakness, much less for cowardice. Last night I informed the British Government that things being as they are, I have found it impossible to detect any inclination on the part of the Polish Government to enter into a really serious discussion with us.

These proposals of mediation are thus wrecked, for in the meantime the answer to these offers of mediation had been, first, the order for Polish general mobilization, and, secondly, serious additional outrages. Repetitions of the latter incidents occurred last night. Only recently during one single night 21 frontier incidents occurred, last night there were 14, three of them of a most serious character.

For that reason, I have now decided to address Poland in exactly the same language as Poland has been using toward us for months.

If there are Statesmen in the West who declare that their interests are involved, I can only regret the fact. Their opinion, however, cannot for one single minute persuade me to deviate from the execution of my duties. I have solemnly declared and repeat once more that we have

no claims at all on these Western States, and shall never demand anything from them. I have declared that the frontier between Germany and France is final. I have repeatedly offered Britain our friendship, and if necessary closest co-operation. Love, however, is not a one-sided affair, but must be responded to by the other side. Germany has no interests in the West, our fortifications in the West (*Westwall*) are for all times to become the frontier of the Reich. We have no other aims in the future, and this attitude of the Reich will remain unchanged.

Some of the other European States understand our attitude. First of all I would thank Italy for having supported us all this time. You will also understand that we do not want to make an appeal for any foreign help in this struggle. This task of ours we shall solve ourselves.

The neutral states have assured us of their neutrality exactly as we previously guaranteed their neutrality. This assurance we consider a sacred obligation, and as long as nobody infringes upon their neutrality, we too shall painstakingly observe it. Because, what could we expect or desire from them?

I feel very much gratified at being able to inform you here of an event of special importance. You are aware that Russia and Germany are governed by two different doctrines. There was only one single question to be cleared: Germany has no intention of exporting her doctrine, and as long as Soviet Russia does not intend to export her own doctrine to Germany, I no longer see any reason why we should ever be opponents again. Both of us are agreed on this one point: any struggle between us would only result in the benefit of others. We have therefore resolved to enter into an agreement which will exclude any application of force between us in the future, which imposes on us an obligation to consult with each other in certain European questions, which facilitates economic collaboration and above all warrants that the energies of our two great states are not consumed by mutual enmity.

Any attempt on the part of the Western States to alter these facts will prove futile, and in that connection I should like to state one thing: this political decision signifies an enormous change in future developments and is absolutely final!

I believe that the whole German people will welcome this political attitude. In the Great War, Russia and Germany fought against each other and were both of them ultimate sufferers. That will never happen again! Yesterday, the Non-aggression and Consultation Pact, which came into force the day it was signed, was ratified in Moscow and in Berlin.

In Moscow, the Pact was acclaimed just as you have acclaimed it here. I approve of every word in the speech made by M. Molotow, the Russian Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

Our aims: I am determined to solve:

firstly, the Danzig question;

secondly, the Corridor question;

thirdly, to see to it that a change takes place in Germany's relations to Poland, which will ensure a peaceful co-existence of the two States.

I am determined to fight either until the present Polish Government are disposed to effect this change or until another Polish Government are prepared to do so.

I am determined to eliminate from the German frontiers the element of insecurity, the atmosphere which permanently resembles that of civil war. I shall see to it that on the eastern frontier the same peaceful conditions prevail as on our other frontiers.

All actions in fulfillment of this aim will be carried out in such a way as not to contradict the proposals which I made known to you here, Members of the Reichstag, as my proposals to the rest of the world.

That is, I will not wage war against women and children! I have instructed my Air Force to limit their attacks to military objectives. But should the enemy think this gives him *carte blanche* to fight in the opposite way, then he will get an answer which will drive him out of his senses!

In the night Polish soldiers of the Regular Army fired the first shots in our own territory. Since 5.45 a. m. we have been returning their fire. And from now onwards every bomb will be answered by another bomb. Whoever fights with poison gas will be fought with poison gas. Whoever disregards the rules of human warfare can but expect us to do the same.

I will carry on this fight, no matter against whom, until such time as the safety of the Reich and its rights are secured!

For more than six years now I have been engaged in building up the German armed forces. During this period more than 90 billion Reichsmarks have been expended in creating our armed forces. Today, they are the best equipped in the world and are far superior to those of 1914. My confidence in them can never be shaken.

In calling up these forces, and in expecting the German people to make sacrifices, if necessary unlimited sacrifices, I have done only what I have a right to do; for I myself am just as ready today as I was in the past to make every personal sacrifice. There is nothing I demand of any German which I myself was not prepared to do at any moment for more than four years. There shall not be any deprivations for Germans in which I myself shall not immediately share. From this moment my whole life shall belong more than ever to my people. I now want to be nothing but the first soldier of the German Reich.

Therefore, I have once again put on that uniform which was always so sacred and dear to me. I shall not lay it aside until after the victory —or I shall not live to see the end.

Should anything happen to me in this war, my first successor shall be Party Member Göring. Should anything happen to Party Member Göring, his successor shall be Party Member Hess. To these men as your leaders you would then owe the same absolute loyalty and obedience that you owe me. In the event that something fatal should happen to Party Member Hess, I am about to make legal provisions for the convocation of a Senate appointed by me, who shall then elect the worthiest, that is to say the most valiant among themselves.

As a National Socialist and a German soldier I enter upon this fight with a stout heart! My whole life has been but one continuous struggle for my people, for the rebirth of Germany, and that whole struggle has been inspired by one single conviction: Faith in my people!

One word I have never known: Capitulation. If, however, there should be any one who thinks that we are on the verge of hard times, I would urge him to consider the fact that at one time a Prussian king ruling over a ridiculously small state confronted one of the greatest coalitions ever known and came forth victorious after three campaigns, simply because he was possessed of that undaunted spirit and firm faith which are required of us in these times.

As for the rest of the world, I can only assure them that November, 1918, shall never occur again in German history.

I ask of every German what I myself am prepared to do at any moment: to be ready to lay down his life for his people and for his country.

If any one thinks that he can evade this national duty directly or indirectly, he will perish. We will have nothing to do with traitors. We are acting only in accordance with our old principle: Our own life matters nothing, all that matters is that our people, that Germany shall live.

I expect of you, as deputies of the Reich, that you will do your duty in whatever position you are called upon to fill. You must bear the standard of resistance, cost what it may. Let no one report to me at any time that his province, his district, his group or his cell are losing heart. It is you who are responsible for public feeling. I am responsible for public feeling throughout Germany and you are responsible for public feeling in your provinces and districts. No one has the right to shelve this responsibility. The sacrifice that is demanded of us is not greater than the sacrifice which has been made by many generations in the past. All those men who before us have trod the hardest and most difficult path for Germany's sake did nothing less than we are called upon to do; the sacrifice they made was no less costly, no less painful, and therefore no easier than the sacrifice that may be demanded of us.

I also expect every German woman to take her place with unflinching discipline in this great fighting community.

German Youth, needless to say, will do, with heart and soul, what is expected and demanded of it by the nation and by the National-Socialist State.

If we form this community, fused together, ready for everything, determined never to capitulate, our firm resolve will master every emergency.

I conclude with the words with which I once started my fight for power in the Reich. At that time I said: "If our will is so strong that no emergency can break it, then our will and our good German sword will master and subjugate even need and distress."

Germany—Sieg Heil!

No. 472 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with the British Ambassador, September 1, 1939, at 9 P. M.

Memorandum of Dr. Schmidt, Minister Plenipotentiary

On behalf of his Government, Sir Nevile Henderson delivered the following note, to which he also added an unofficial written translation in German:

Berlin, September 1, 1939

Your Excellency:

On the instructions of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I have the honor to make the following communication:

Early this morning the German Chancellor issued a proclamation to the German Army which indicated clearly that he was about to attack Poland.

Information which has reached His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the French Government indicates that German troops have crossed the Polish frontier and that attacks on Polish towns are proceeding.

In these circumstances it appears to the Governments of the United Kingdom and France that by their action the German Government have created conditions (viz. an aggressive act of force against Poland, threatening the independence of Poland) which calls for the implementation by the Governments of the United Kingdom and France of the undertaking to Poland to come to her assistance.

Therefore, I am to inform Your Excellency that, unless the German Government are prepared to give His Majesty's Government satisfactory assurances that the German Government have suspended all aggressive action against Poland and are prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will without hesitation fulfill their obligations to Poland.

I avail myself, etc.

Nevile Henderson

The German Foreign Minister replied that no German act of aggression had taken place, but that for months Poland had provoked Germany. It was not Germany that had mobilized against Poland, but Poland against Germany. In addition to that, on the previous day regular and irregular Polish units had invaded German territory.

He would submit the note handed to him by the British Ambassador to the Fuehrer and then reply at once. The Foreign Minister added that if the British Government had been as active in Poland as they now apparently intended to be in Germany, a settlement with Poland would have been reached long ago.

Sir Nevile Henderson replied that he would communicate these remarks to his Government and asked that the Fuehrer might be informed of the contents of the note. He asked for as speedy an answer as possible.

The Foreign Minister replied there had really been no reason to notify the British Government of the German proposals, as these proposals had become null and void by the non-appearance of the Polish negotiator. In spite of this, he (the Foreign Minister) had read these proposals to Henderson in the secret hope that Britain might still bring Poland to reason. The Fuehrer had waited another whole day in vain—Poland had only replied by new and grave provocations.

Sir Nevile Henderson replied that he greatly deplored that the Foreign Minister, in the course of his last conversation, had refused to hand over a copy of the proposals to him (Henderson). It was comprehensible that he had not understood most of it, as the German text of this rather long and complicated document had been read so quickly.

The Foreign Minister drew attention to the fact that he had read the documents slowly and distinctly and that he had even given oral explanations on the main points (Danzig, plebiscite in the Corridor, protection of minorities). He had not been authorized to hand over the document to him, and had therefore read it, hoping that on the next day at least Poland would agree to it. The Fuehrer had waited another whole day and had finally come to the conclusion that Britain did not wish to do anything further.

When Henderson once more expressed his regret that the proposals had not been handed over to him in spite of his request, the Foreign Minister repeated that he had read the document slowly and had explained several points so that he was justified in believing that Henderson had understood everything.

Schmidt

No. 473 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with the French Ambassador, September 1, 1939, at 10 P. M.

Memorandum of Dr. Schmidt, Minister Plenipotentiary

(Translation)

Ambassador Coulondre presented the following note identical with the one previously delivered by Sir Nevile Henderson, without adding a German translation:

Berlin, September 1, 1939

Your Excellency:

On the instructions of the French Foreign Minister I have the honor to make the following communication:

Early this morning the German Chancellor issued a proclamation to the German Army which indicated clearly that he was about to attack Poland.

Information which has reached the French Government and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom indicates that German troops have crossed the Polish frontier and that attacks on Polish towns are proceeding.

In these circumstances it appears to the Governments of France and the United Kingdom that by their action the German Government have created conditions (viz. an aggressive act of force against Poland threatening the independence of Poland) which calls for the implementation by the Governments of France and the United Kingdom of the undertaking to Poland, to come to her assistance.

I am accordingly to inform Your Excellency that, unless the German Government are prepared to give the French Government satisfactory assurances that the German Government have suspended all aggressive action against Poland and are prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, the French Government will without hesitation fulfill their obligations to Poland.

I avail myself, etc.

Coulondre

The German Foreign Minister replied that he could only state the same to Ambassador Coulondre as he had already said to the British Ambassador. Germany had undertaken no act of aggression against Poland, but Poland for months had provoked Germany in an incredible manner by the economic strangulation of Danzig, by tormenting the German minority in Poland, and by continual violations of the frontiers. The Fuehrer had shown unparalleled patience and had still hoped that Poland would come to reason. The reverse had happened. Poland, after having started mobilizing months ago, had now formally ordered general

mobilization and, last night, had not only violated the frontier, but had also flagrantly invaded German territory on three occasions. On the strength of these facts Germany, therefore, refuted the version of a German aggression against Poland.

In conclusion, the Foreign Minister promised to inform the Fuehrer of the contents of the note, and then to send an answer to the French Ambassador.

Schmidt

No. 474 Communication Delivered to the Foreign Office by the Italian Ambassador on the Morning of September 2, 1939*

(Translation)

For your information Italy communicates to you, naturally leaving every decision to the Fuehrer, that she is still in a position to seek the consent of France, England and Poland to a conference on the following basis:

1. An armistice, leaving the armies where they now are.
2. The calling of a conference within two or three days.
3. A solution of the Polish-German conflict, which, as matters stand today, would certainly be favorable to Germany.

This idea, which originated with the Duce, is today particularly advocated by France.

No. 475 Bulletin from the Havas News Agency, September 2, 1939

(Translation)

The French Government as well as several other Governments have yesterday been informed of an Italian proposal for a settlement of the European difficulties. After discussing the proposal the French Government gave a reply in the affirmative.

No. 476 Extract from a Statement by Lord Halifax, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the House of Lords on the Afternoon of September 2, 1939**

. . . . . Up to the present no reply has been received [to the warning message delivered to Germany the night before].

* In the Memorandum of September 3, 1939 (No. 479 § 3) the public was informed that the German Government had communicated to the Italian Ambassador their willingness to accept this proposal. Cf. also No. 482.

** An identical statement was made at the same time by the British Prime Minister in the House of Commons.

It is possible that delay has been due to a proposal which has meanwhile been put forward by the Italian Government that hostilities should cease and that there should then immediately be a conference between the five Powers—Great Britain, France, Poland, Germany and Italy.

. . . . . His Majesty's Government would not find it possible to take part in a conference while Poland is being subjected to invasion, her towns are under bombardment and Danzig has been made the subject of a unilateral settlement by force. . . . . .

No. 477 Note Delivered to the Foreign Office by the British Ambassador, September 3, 1939, at 9 A. M.

September 3, 1939

Your Excellency:

In the communication which I had the honor to make to you on September 1, I informed you on the instructions of his Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that, unless the German Government were prepared to give His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom satisfactory assurances that the German Government had suspended all aggressive action against Poland and were prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would without hesitation fulfill their obligations to Poland.

Although this communication was made more than twenty-four hours ago, no reply has been received, but German attacks upon Poland have been continued and intensified. I have accordingly the honor to inform you that, unless not later than 11 a. m. British Summer Time today, September 3, satisfactory assurance to the above effect has been given by the German Government and has reached His Majesty's Government in London, a state of war will exist between the two countries as from that hour.

I avail myself of this opportunity. . . . . .

Nevile Henderson

No. 478 Note from Lord Halifax, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Delivered to the German Chargé d'Affaires in London, September 3, 1939, at 11:15 A. M.

September 3, 1939

Sir:

On September 1 H. M. Ambassador in Berlin acting upon my instructions informed the same Government that, unless they were prepared to

give H. M. Government in the United Kingdom satisfactory assurances that the German Government have suspended all aggressive actions against Poland and were prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, H. M. Government in the United Kingdom would without hesitation fulfill their obligations to Poland.

At 9 a. m. this morning H. M. Ambassador in Berlin acting upon my instructions informed the German Government that unless not later than 11 a. m. British summer time, today, September 3, satisfactory assurance to the above effect has been given by the German Government and has reached H. M. Government in London, a state of war would exist between the two countries as from that hour.

No such assurances having been received, I have the honor to inform you that a state of war exists between the two countries as from 11 a. m. today, September 3.

I have the honor. . . . . .

Halifax

No. 479 Memorandum from the German Government, Delivered to the British Ambassador by the German Foreign Minister, September 3, 1939, at 11:30 A. M.

(Translation)

The German Government acknowledges receipt of the British Government's ultimatum of September 3, 1939, to which the German Government has the honor to reply as follows:

1. The German Government and the German people refuse to be handed, to accept and, still less, to comply with demands amounting to an ultimatum made by the British Government.

2. For many months past a state of war has actually prevailed along our eastern border. Ever since the Treaty of Versailles rent Germany in two, all subsequent German Governments were denied any peaceful settlement. Since 1933, the National Socialist Government have also tried again and again by way of peaceful negotiations to do away with the worst oppression and violations of law perpetrated by that treaty. Primarily it has been the British Government who by their intransigent attitude have frustrated any practical revision. Had it not been for the interference on the part of the British Government, a reasonable solution, doing justice to either party, would undoubtedly have been arrived at between Germany and Poland, a fact which the Reich Government and the German people are convinced of. For Germany had no intention of destroying Poland, nor did she ever demand Poland's

destruction. All that the Reich demanded was the revision of those articles in the Treaty of Versailles which sensible statesmen of all nations, even at the time when the treaty was drawn up, termed unbearable for any length of time—unbearable both for a great nation and for the entire political and economic interest of Eastern Europe, and therefore impossible. Even British statesmen declared specifically that the terms which Germany was forced to accept in the East held the seed of future wars. To do away with this danger has been the desire of every German Government, and in particular the aim of the new National Socialist Government of the German people. The policy of the British Cabinet is to blame for the fact that a peaceful revision has not been reached.

3. The British Government—an unprecedented occurrence in history—has given Poland full power with regard to any action against Germany which she might intend to undertake. The British Government gave the Polish Government the assurance of their military support in any circumstances, in case Germany should commence hostilities in reply to any provocation or attack. Thereupon Polish acts of terror against Germans domiciled in the districts torn from Germany immediately assumed intolerable proportions. The treatment to which the Free City of Danzig was subjected was in contravention to all legal provisions; it was first threatened with economic ruin and submitted to customs restrictions, and finally encircled by military forces and throttled by transport restrictions. Every one of these infringements of the Danzig Statute was fully known to, and approved by, the British Government, and backed by the blank check given to Poland. The German Government, although greatly distressed by the sufferings of the German minority subjected to atrocities and inhuman treatment by the Poles, nevertheless looked on in patience for five months, without once undertaking even the slightest aggressive action of a similar nature against Poland.

   Germany merely warned Poland that these actions would not be tolerated in the long run and that she was determined, in the event of no other help forthcoming for the population concerned, to take the matter in hand herself. The British Government were fully aware of all that was going on. It would have been an easy matter for them to use their great influence in Warsaw to exhort those in authority to conform to the laws of justice and humanity, and to fulfill their existing obligations. The British Government did not see fit to do anything of the kind. On the contrary, by constantly stressing the fact of their duty to assist Poland under all circumstances, they clearly encouraged Poland to continue in her criminal attitude which was endangering the peace of Europe. On these lines the British Government rejected the proposal made

by Mussolini which still might have saved the peace of Europe, although the German Government had expressed their readiness to accept such proposal. The British Government are thus responsible for all the misery and suffering that has overtaken now, or is about to overtake, so many peoples.

4. Now that all attempts to find and settle on a peaceful solution have been frustrated owing to the intransigent attitude of the Polish Government as shielded by Great Britain; now that for many months conditions similar to civil war on the eastern frontiers of the Reich have gradually,—without any objection on the part of the British Government—assumed the character of open attacks on German territory, the German Government have decided to put an end to the continued menace, at first from outside, but later also at home, against the peace of the German nation, a situation no Great Power can be expected to bear. In order to defend the peace, the security and the honor of the German Reich, the German Government have decided to resort to the only means now left to them, since the Governments of the Democracies have wantonly frustrated all other possibilities of a revision. They have replied to the last Polish attacks threatening German territory with similar measures. The German Government are not willing, on account of any British intentions or obligations, to tolerate in the East of the Reich conditions similar to those prevailing in the British Protectorate of Palestine. The German people, however, is certainly not willing to submit to ill-treatment by Poland.

5. The German Government therefore reject any attempt to force Germany, by an ultimative demand, to withdraw her troops, called up for the purpose of protecting the Reich, and thus to put up once more with the former unrest and injustice. The threat that war would otherwise be waged against Germany coincides with the intentions, for many years proclaimed, of numerous British politicians. Innumerable times the German Government and the German people have assured the British people of their desire for an understanding and even close friendship with them. If the British Government have hitherto rejected these offers and now reply to them with an open threat of war, the responsibility for this lies not with the German nation and its Government, but exclusively with the British Cabinet, especially with those men who for years have preached the destruction and extermination of the German people. The German people and the German Government do not intend, as does Great Britain, to rule the world, but they are determined to defend their own freedom, their independence and very life. We take note of the intentions, made known to us

by Mr. King Hall on behalf of the British Government, to deal the German nation a still more crushing blow than did the Treaty of Versailles, and shall therefore reply to any act of aggression on the part of Great Britain with the same weapons and in the same way.

Berlin, September 3, 1939.

No. 480 Note Delivered to the German Foreign Minister by the French Ambassador, September 3, 1939, at 12:20 P. M.

(Translation)

Berlin, September 3, 1939

Your Excellency:

As I received no satisfactory reply from the German Government at noon on September 3 to the note which I handed to you on September 1 at 10 p. m., I have the honor of making the following communication to you on behalf of my government:

The Government of the French Republic consider it their duty to remind you for the last time of the grave responsibility which the German Government incurred when they opened hostilities against Poland without a declaration of war and did not adopt the proposal of the Governments of the French Republic and that of His Britannic Majesty to desist from every aggressive action against Poland and to declare themselves ready immediately to withdraw their troops from Polish territory.

The Government of the Republic, therefore, have the honor of informing the German Government that they see themselves in duty bound to fulfill the contractual obligations, from today, September 3, 5 p. m. onwards, which they have entered into with Poland, and with which the German Government are acquainted.

Permit me. . . . . .

Coulondre

No. 481 Conversation of the German Foreign Minister with the French Ambassador, September 3, 1939, at 12:20 P. M.

Memorandum of Dr. Schmidt, Minister Plenipotentiary

(Translation)

When Coulondre asked the German Foreign Minister whether he was in a position to give a satisfactory answer to the question contained in the

note handed to him on September 1 at 10 p. m., Herr von Ribbentrop replied that after Great Britain and France had handed over their notes, a new proposal for mediation had been made by the head of the Italian Government who added that the French Government had consented to this proposal. The previous day Germany had also communicated to the Duce her readiness to consent to the proposal, but later in the day the Duce had informed the German Government that his proposal had been frustrated by the intransigence of the British Government. This morning Britain had sent an ultimatum to Germany with a time limit of two hours. Germany had rejected the demands contained in this ultimatum in a written communication. The reasons for the rejection of the British ultimatum were contained in this document, which he (the Foreign Minister) handed over to the French Ambassador for his information.* Should France's attitude towards Germany be determined by the same considerations as that of the British Government, the German Government could only regret the fact. Germany had always wished for an understanding with France. Should the French Government nevertheless take up a hostile attitude towards Germany by reason of their obligations towards Poland, the German Government would consider this a totally unjustified war of aggression on the part of France against Germany. Germany herself would refrain from every act of aggression against France. Should France, however, adopt a different attitude Germany would see herself compelled to reply accordingly.

Coulondre replied that he concluded from the statements made by the German Foreign Minister that the German Government were not in a position to comply with the suggestion contained in the French note of September 1.**

The German Foreign Minister stated that this was the case.

Coulondre then replied that under these circumstances it was his painful duty to draw the attention of the German Government once more to the grave responsibility which they had taken upon themselves by the opening of hostilities against Poland without a declaration of war, and to inform them that the French Government saw themselves compelled to fulfill their obligations towards Poland as from today, September 3, 1939, 5 p. m. At the same time Coulondre handed over a written communication.*** After having read it, the Foreign Minister added in conclusion that Germany had no intention of attacking France and that the present French Government bore the full responsibility for the suffering which would be brought upon both countries if France attacked Germany.

Schmidt

* Cf. No. 479.
** Cf. No. 473.
*** Cf. No. 480.

No. 482 The State Secretary at the Foreign Office to the German Diplomatic Representatives

Circular by Telegraph

(Translation)

Berlin, September 3, 1939

For your information and for your direction in conversations.

After attempt of direct German-Polish discussions had failed, due to non-appearance of Polish Plenipotentiary in spite of two days' wait on part of German Government, and after we had been forced to answer Polish military encroachment by resorting to military action, Great Britain and France on September 1 demanded of us that we should withdraw German troops from Polish territory. Danger of war, as it seemed, could still be removed by intervention of Mussolini, who proposed armistice and subsequent conference to solve German-Polish conflict. This proposal has been answered in the affirmative by us and also by the French Government; British Government, however, today, fixing time limit of two hours, repeated demand for withdrawal of German troops, and after this time had elapsed declared themselves at war with Germany. France followed suit by communicating that she saw herself compelled to assist Poland.

Reasonable German-Polish settlement could certainly have been attained long ago without interference on part of Britain and her anti-German policy of encirclement. But instead of urging Poland to give in, Britain gave Poland a blank check against Germany, involved herself in dependence on Poland's decisions and at the last moment even frustrated Mussolini's proposals by her attitude. This is the harvest reaped by those men in Britain who for years have preached Germany's annihilation. This course of events clearly shows Britain's full responsibility for the outbreak of war.

Weizsäcker

Supplement

The following documents representing official German replies to the *British War Blue Book,* the *French Yellow Book,* etc., are reprinted from *Facts in Review.*

A. Germany's Reply to British War Blue Book

We herewith present for students of international affairs a summary of the reply of the German Government to the British War Blue Book on the origin of the war. The British War Blue Book was intended to present conclusive proof that Germany was solely to blame for the outbreak of war. To this end, England compiled a highly eclectic series of documents, which in themselves were designed to support this contention. In its reply to this publication, the German government has enumerated some of the omissions from the Blue Book, and pointed out the way in which they place some of the British documents in a different light. As a result the observer placing both sets of evidence side by side is inevitably led to a conclusion precisely opposite to that drawn by the British government. In the light of this supplementary evidence, the conduct of Lord Halifax assumes an appearance which is at best ambiguous. Furthermore it clearly appears that it was the conduct of the British Ambassador to Warsaw which, perhaps upon instructions, made the last attempt to settle the German-Polish problem by peaceful negotiation impossible. Bent upon war, British diplomacy, with subterfuges, delays, evasions, and outright falsehood, Germany charges, deliberately deceived not only Germany, but Britain's own allies, Poland and France.

England wanted war. Germany can bring proof after proof before the eyes of the world for that. Until now England has not been able to show anything to the contrary. For that reason she has resorted time and again to lies and distortions.

The British Blue Book which recently appeared and with which the German press has already concerned itself, even after the most exact examinations, shows itself to be no more than an unsuccessful attempt at exoneration. It is a new but weak attempt to pervert the truth. For those who know how to read, this English collection of documents is really a unique and positive proof of England's will to war.

The documents are arbitrarily gathered in the British Blue Book in order to create a one-sided impression. Other documents

have been omitted, and in addition, the general contents can make no pretense to exactness and exhaustive presentation.

Malevolent and Dishonest

It would be too much to go into all these inexactitudes and contradictions. We wish however, from all these obscurations to single out one point which clearly proves that England did not act honorably as an intermediary between Poland and Germany as she alleged, but operated as just that force through whose well-considered intrigues the war became inevitable.

The Blue Book is proof in itself that British diplomacy did not attempt to effect direct Polish-German negotiations upon which, in the final phase of the last days of August, everything depended if war were to be prevented; on the contrary it malevolently prevented such negotiations.

British Contention

It is the contention of false English propaganda that Viscount Halifax endeavored until the end to bring Germany and Poland together around a conference table in order to reach a peaceful solution on the lines of the German thesis. Actually the goal of Halifax and his helper, the British Ambassador in Warsaw, Sir Howard Kennard, consisted of keeping the Poles from entering into serious negotiations with the Germans. This is fully and completely confirmed by the British Blue Book. It appears scarcely believable but it is nevertheless true.

The Bare Facts

Documents in the Blue Book show:

1. That Halifax grossly duped the German Government when he declared that he had received an assurance from Warsaw that Poland was ready to negotiate.

2. Kennard consciously delayed the execution of a mission which he received from London, to recommend that Poland enter into negotiations with the Reich, until the deadline, which necessarily had to be set by the Reich, as a result of the Polish mobilization, had expired.

3. Polish willingness to negotiate on the moderate German proposals was not evident, only because the Poles believed themselves able to rely on British assistance.

4. The French Government, which manifestly was also interested in the dispatch of a Polish plenipotentiary or representative to Berlin in the last hour, was also deceived by England. In reality England did absolutely nothing toward bringing about these negotiations upon which war or peace were dependent.

5. Proof, which has already appeared in a German White Book,* that Poland, because of this English double-dealing, never sent a plenipotentiary or representative to Berlin and that the Polish Ambassador in Berlin was not authorized to enter any definite negotiations. Yes, that, so to speak, every form of discussion was forbidden him is fully demonstrated by the English Blue Book.

These are the naked facts which are revealed in documents published by the English. They not only prove England's responsibility for the war; they also reveal much more, namely that the British Government carried on their infamous double-dealing during the decisive days at the end of August. This fact was not clearly demonstrable until the release of the British documents.

In the following paragraphs we condense the documents which reveal the foul play of British diplomacy between August 28 and 31.

First Deception

On August 25 the Fuehrer gave Henderson the declaration in which the necessity for the solution of the problem of the Danzig Corridor as quickly as possible was pointed out and which again contained in the most generous form an offer of friendship to England. Three days later, on Aug. 28, Henderson appeared before the Fuehrer in order to give the latter, as an answer to the German proposals of August 25, a memorandum from the British Government.

* "Documents Concerning the Last Phase of the German-Polish Crisis", American edition, published by the German Library of Information.

In this memorandum the German Government was asked to enter into direct negotiations with the Polish Government.

The English memorandum says literally in this regard:

"His Majesty's Government has already received a definitive assurance from the Polish Government that it is prepared to agree to such procedure."

The British memorandum added that:

"If such conversations could lead to an understanding, a way would be open for a broader and more comprehensive understanding between Great Britain and Germany."

On the basis of these assertions and wishes, it appeared to the German Government that a peaceful solution of the problems confronting Europe was still possible, if—in spite of the provocative conduct of the Polish Government—Berlin agreed to direct negotiations with Poland. Furthermore, the German Government assumed, in view of the text of the English memorandum, that the Poles had already consented to such a procedure.

Reich Willing to Negotiate Despite Skepticism

On the afternoon of August 29 the German Government, therefore, declared, in spite of its skeptical judgment of the prospects of direct conversations, that it was ready to accept the English proposal and enter into these negotiations. A prerequisite was the dispatch of a fully empowered Polish emissary to Berlin, through the mediation of the British Government, on Wednesday, August 30. In the meantime, that is in the night between August 29 and 30, the German Government was to work out an acceptable solution and upon the arrival of the Polish negotiator to place it also at the disposal of the British Government. By consenting to this suggestion Germany took the most extreme step possible under the circumstances, to save peace. Because of his desire for peace Hitler accepted the English proposals in their full extent. The kernel of this Anglo-German exchange of notes on August 28 and 29 was the British declaration that there was already in London "a definitive assurance" from the Polish Government that it was ready for

these conversations. It was only on the basis of this declaration that the German Government was in the position to grant a last respite before taking steps to end the intolerable tension on the German-Polish border.

From the Blue Book it follows that the British Government, meanwhile, was not at all interested in its own proposal that negotiations between Berlin and Warsaw should take place immediately. The proposal, manifestly, was made by the British only to gain time.

British Trick to Gain Time

In her memorandum of August 28th England declared that she had a definite acceptance from Poland; as a matter of fact there had been no negotiations with Poland about this matter at all. Halifax, it is true, had instructed the British Ambassador at Warsaw to persuade the Polish Government to agree to direct negotiations with Germany through British mediation. This dispatch was dated August 28th. But, Halifax added in the same breath, that the readiness of the Polish Government to enter into direct negotiations with Germany naturally did not signify in any way Polish acceptance of Germany's demands.

That was all the English did, as the Blue Book shows. Acceptance from Poland did not materialize, either on August 28 or on the two days following.

In view of the facts, we now know that the British declaration of August 28, to the effect that the British Government had in hand a definitive assurance of the readiness of the Polish Government to enter direct negotiations, was a lie.

Polish Acceptance Fictitious

At this time the British Government had nothing in hand. It had merely directed a proposal to Poland and Germany. The proposal to Poland was phrased in such a manner that the Polish Government could reject it; in fact, it could interpret it as a demand to reply in the negative. These facts, which will presently emerge even more clearly, conclusively prove that in the

final phase of the crisis the most important British memorandum was constructed on falsehood.

When Halifax learned in the night between August 29 and August 30 of the German willingness to receive a Polish plenipotentiary he had to telegraph Sir Nevile Henderson,* since he really had no Polish acceptance in his hand (the telegram was dated August 30 at 2 o'clock in the morning):

"It is contrary to all reason to expect that a Polish agent can still come today to Berlin." Henderson replied that Hitler had called to his attention the previous night that one can fly from Warsaw to Berlin in ninety minutes. Since the entire diplomatic manoeuvre of Halifax rested upon falsehood, this simple counter-argument naturally went unobserved in London. Halifax was really not at all interested that a Polish emissary should appear in Berlin.

Kennard refused to inform the Polish Government and invite it to negotiate. To the British Ambassador at Warsaw was assigned a delivery role in the decisive hours. At 10 o'clock in the morning of August 30, Halifax received a telegram from Kennard which reveals that the British Ambassador did not even transmit to Poland the demand of the British Government of August 28 to enter into direct conversation. It is possible that he was in possession of secret instructions, obviously not mentioned in the Blue Book. It is inconceivable that an Ambassador in such a situation would refuse to carry out the instructions of his government.

Kennard Message Reveals Double Game

The following must, therefore, be adduced from Kennard's published telegram of August 30:

Kennard declared he was convinced that it was impossible to persuade Beck or some other Polish emissary to depart for Berlin immediately to conclude an agreement on the basis proposed by Hitler. His telegram continues verbatim:

* See the telegram from Sir H. Kennard to Viscount Halifax, (Document No. 72 in the "British War Blue Book", American Edition) which refers to a dispatch of a Polish plenipotentiary to discuss the conditions prepared by the German Government in the night of August 28, sometimes called the "Sixteen Points".

"If it is recalled that the Polish Government, in month of March, when it stood alone, was not prepared for war and rejected the German proposals, then it would definitely have been impossible for it to accept proposals which apparently exceeded those of March now that Poland had Britain as an ally and was assured of France's aid."

Kennard concluded his telegram:

"I shall naturally not volunteer any view to the Polish Government, neither shall I transmit Hitler's answer (this refers to the German answer of August 29, which expressed the German readiness to enter direct negotiations) until I have received instructions which I assume will be forthcoming at once."

This reply of the British Ambassador at Warsaw reveals with complete clarity the British interplay of lies and intrigues. Not only did the British Government possess no promise from Poland, as it claimed two days earlier, but its Ambassador in Warsaw did not even transmit the British proposal to the Polish Government solely on the ground that Poland would refuse to negotiate in any event because it felt itself strong enough, by virtue of its alliance with Britain, to reject the proposals of Hitler.

Collusion or Insubordination

Either Kennard's refusal to transmit his government's instructions to Poland was a flagrant insubordination or it was collusion. Perusal of the British Blue Book, therefore, proves that, while the Reich Government in Berlin was waiting in vain for a Polish negotiator, British diplomacy, which unequivocally pledged itself to do its best to this end, in reality not only failed to keep Poland informed of the drift of events and developments but also kept from the Polish Government Germany's readiness to negotiate.

The strange attitude of Kennard unquestionably suggests collusion with the Foreign Office. If Halifax actually had played the role of honest broker, one would assume that he would have instructed his Ambassador in Warsaw, after learning from the

latter's telegram of August 28th that he had not as yet delivered the note to the Polish Government, to undertake forthwith everything in his power to compel Poland to enter negotiations.

Throughout all of August 30th, no instructions to this effect went forward to Kennard. On the other hand, Halifax sent a message to Henderson in which he stated:

"We have taken cognizance of the German demand that a Polish emissary with complete credentials come to Berlin to receive the German proposals. We cannot counsel the Polish Government to consent to such a procedure, which is completely contrary to all reason."

Halifax must have known, in view of the existing state of affairs, that non-compliance with this condition could only mean war. And he knew it.

Facts Concealed

Now the exact situation had been reached which Britain desired to provoke and which was forecast in its mendacious telegram of August 28. The Blue Book conveniently conceals that on this self-same Aug. 30, Poland, instead of sending an emissary to Berlin, ordered general mobilization. All relevant disclosures in the Blue Book prove that mobilization was ordered without Poland being informed, by the dishonest broker Halifax or his aide Kennard, of developments. It was not until the morning of Aug. 31, when the time limit fixed by Germany had expired, that Halifax instructed the British Ambassador at Warsaw to apprise Beck of the German note of Aug. 29, and the British reply thereto. It was only then that the Poles were urged to get in touch with Berlin. The British Government, therefore, not only lied in its note of Aug. 28, but it waited until the morning of Aug. 31 before informing the Polish Government of the state of things in Berlin and of Germany's readiness to enter into negotiations.

British Intrigues and Subterfuges

The Blue Book admits Britain's sole responsibility for Poland's refusal to negotiate. The German statement asserts:

"The telegram of Kennard of Aug. 30, cited above, confirms Germany's contention that Poland never indicated a willingness to reach an amicable agreement with us because it felt that the British guarantee sufficiently justified her to indulge in any sort of provocation."

Even the French were duped and kept uninformed through British duplicity. England evidently feared that France would desert the British chariot at the last minute, if it clearly realized the war-like intentions of British diplomacy.

"Paris, manifestly, was informed on Aug. 30 or 31, that the Reich Government had vainly awaited a Polish emissary." The German statement adds that just why he never appeared also was concealed from the Quai d'Orsay.

"On the evening of Aug. 31," to quote further, "Kennard reported to Halifax about his conversation with Beck. This telegram reveals that Beck merely instructed Lipski, Polish Ambassador to Berlin, to inform the German Foreign Office that Poland was giving the British proposals favorable consideration. Beck, however, according to Kennard's message, stated that 'Lipski will not be authorized to accept any document containing German proposals.' Beck also stated that under no circumstances would he go to Berlin. Thereby the German proposal to Poland to dispatch an emissary was definitely rejected—an objective successfully reached through British duplicity."

The German statement concludes:

"The British Blue Book proves conclusively that instead of promoting direct contacts between Berlin and Warsaw during the four decisive days of Aug. 28 to 31, Britain through a series of malicious intrigues and mendacity devoted its entire diplomatic mechanism to the purpose of giving Poland time to complete her mobilization and to put off Germany with evasive subterfuges. Such is the role Halifax and his diplomatic aides played in the days preceding the outbreak of war."

Section II (of the British Blue Book): Certain Favorable Remarks of the Fuehrer on the Subject of Poland between 1935 and 1939.

The remarks of the Fuehrer, cited in this section of the Blue Book, were inspired by the confidential relations existing at that time between Germany and Poland. This relationship was destroyed suddenly and without provocation by Poland in March 1939. While it continued it was inadvisable for German statesmen to give the Western Powers the slightest opportunity for driving a wedge between the two countries by revealing points of friction between Berlin and Warsaw. The fact that these controversies, created by the Peace Treaty of Versailles, existed and that they were accentuated, particularly after the death of Marshal Pilsudski, by repressive measures against the German element in Poland, is confirmed by innumerable diplomatic representations made by the German Government to the Polish Government throughout that period.

It is obvious from the words of the Fuehrer (compare especially his speech of September 26, 1938) that he still placed his trust in the judgment of the Polish Government. The same faith engendered his extremely moderate proposals of March 21, 1939. The Chancellor's confidence in the good will of the Polish Government to reach an amicable agreement was finally destroyed at the end of March by the actions of the Polish Government. Germany had never ceased to hope that the wounds of Versailles would heal: they were now bound to re-open. This explains the apparent contradiction in the German attitude. When the hope for a radical adjustment along peaceful lines was finally abandoned, a drastic solution appeared inevitable.

Section III: The Deterioration of the European Situation

Here, too, the historical picture is falsified. The deterioration began when Great Britain, after Munich, engaged upon a rearmament program accompanied by provocative speeches on the part of representative British politicians and when Britain's anti-

German policy in the South-East thwarted German confidence in the agreement. Finally Great Britain definitely supplanted, by her policy of encirclement, the course charted in Munich. The Blue Book reflects solely the British argument; it ignores the German point of view formulated in the Fuehrer's speech of April 28, 1939.

Section IV: German-Polish Discussions

This section presents familiar documents, but the interpretation given to them in the prefatory note brazenly falsifies the actual events.

a). The prefatory note claims that the proposals discussed were made for the first time in March, 1939. As a matter of fact conferences for an amicable solution of the problem of Danzig and the Corridor began as early as October 1938. The fact that such discussions had taken place must have been familiar to the authors of the Blue Book from Chancellor Hitler's speeches of April 28th and September 1st.

b). The prefatory note fails to mention the fact that Poland decreed a partial mobilization one day after the receipt of the German proposals of March 1939.

c). The Blue Book also omits the evasive answer of Foreign Minister Beck to Chancellor Hitler's invitation for a personal conference. Beck actually disregarded the invitation by going to London at the end of March without stopping in Berlin.

d). The British Blue Book conceals the fact that the attitude of the Polish Government was decisively influenced by the British encirclement policy. Great Britain frankly enunciated this policy in Warsaw after the middle of March.

Section V: The British-Polish Guarantee

The Blue Book conveniently suppresses the events antedating the British guarantee to Poland. The history of this guarantee is of vital importance in any consideration of German-Polish relations. Already on March 21st, when the German proposals were submitted, Poland had received assurances that Great

Britain would come to her aid, whenever the Polish Government desired such aid. The Blue Book itself reproduces Chamberlain's speech of March 17th and a speech by Lord Halifax of March 20th, in which both statesmen frankly acknowledge the beginning of their encirclement policy. It appears, moreover, from the speech of Lord Halifax that the British Government was in "close and practical contact" with other governments, in order to erect a mutual system of "defense" against the Reich. It cannot be denied in English quarters that Poland was among the first states drawn into these conversations and that she was wooed by London as a highly desirable partner in the encirclement game. The Guarantee Pact gave Poland *carte blanche;* it was the famous blank check.

Section VI: Anglo-German Relations

This section enumerates the fair *words* with which British statesmen attempt to reject the charge of encirclement, but it suppresses the *facts* which constitute the encirclement policy. Any reference to Germany's reaction to the encirclement policy voiced in Chancellor Hitler's speech at Cassel is conspicuous by its absence.

Sections VII to X: The Deterioration of the Local Situation in Danzig

Here, too, the Blue Book distorts the actual events. The authors of the Blue Book introduce this section with the statement that the local condition in Danzig deteriorated rapidly owing to increasing agitation within the Reich. The following facts are suppressed in the Blue Book:

1). The periodic threats, publicly enunciated in Poland, against Danzig by the end of March, and the insistence in the Polish Government press for an enhancement of Polish privileges in Danzig, voiced with increasing frequency by the end of April.

2). Polish military preparations against Danzig which seemed to indicate at various times the immediate danger of a Polish *coup d'état.*

3). Polish military preparations in the City of Danzig (Westerplatte, fortification of Polish buildings and the military training of Danzig Poles in Gdynia).

4). The increasing efforts on Poland's part to throttle Danzig economically through boycotts and controversies.

5). Open Polish provocations on Danzig's territory, such as the murder of a Danzig citizen in Kalthof, in which Polish diplomatic representatives participated; the increase of Polish custom inspectors in Danzig and their illegal activities.

Inasmuch as the above facts are ignored in the Blue Book the impression is created that Danzig raised the controversy concerning the custom inspectors solely to pick a quarrel. The expansion of the Danzig police, falsely described in the Blue Book as the formation of a Danzig "Free Corps," is portrayed as a provocation against Poland, whereas it was, as a matter of fact, a defensive measure.

By reproducing certain tranquil statements by Beck, the attempt is made to create the impression of Polish patience and moderation. Aggressive statements by Polish statesmen, especially the interview of Marshal Smigly-Rydz of July 1939, in which he repeatedly emphasizes that, if needs be, Poland would take up arms for Danzig even without allies, are ignored.

While the Blue Book gives a completely distorted picture of the Danzig situation, it nevertheless clearly demonstrates the irresponsibility evinced by Great Britain.

a). England took no cognizance whatsoever of any incidents in Danzig which were unfavorable to Poland.

b). England made no contribution whatsoever toward an objective solution of the problem.

c). If or when England advised moderation, she did so solely to save her own face, and to mislead public opinion (compare especially the instructions of Lord Halifax conveyed to Warsaw on June 30th [see page 93], and on August 15th [see page 119 of the Blue Book]).

d). It appears from the Blue Book that the initiative to moderation did not at all times originate in London; especially at the beginning of July London obviously preferred to make the situation even more acute. (Compare documents No. 30 and 32 of the Blue Book.)

Section XI: The Position of the German Minority in Poland

This section presents three meager reports of the British Ambassador in Warsaw, incorporating Polish denials of German protests on the mistreatment and intimidation of German racials in Poland, without an attempt to evaluate their veracity. The purpose of this method is to create the impression that no sufferings whatsoever were inflicted upon the German population of Poland. The ill-treatment of the German minority which culminated in an unparalleled reign of terror, is already patent. Without the intervention of the Reich this minority would have suffered complete economic and cultural extinction. Both the New German White Book, and the investigation of Polish atrocities by the Army, also published in book form, offer detailed, documentary evidence of the German charges. The complete suppression of these facts in the Blue Book is a gross falsification of history.

Section XII: Developments Which Led Directly to the Outbreak of Hostilities Between Great Britain and Germany, September 3, 1939

This section, which embraces some 80 pages, contains a number of distorted and colored reports by Henderson on his conversations with the Fuehrer and with the Foreign Minister. These have already been exploited in the sensational press. This section also presents at least a part of the correspondence between the British Foreign Office and the British Ambassador in Warsaw in the critical days preceding the outbreak of the war. For any critical study of the part played by England in this phase, the following points are significant:

1). With reference to the Anglo-German conversations of August 25th, the Blue Book contains additional proof that the

British Government was prepared to make minor concessions in matters of procedure, but that it did not have the slightest intention of lending the weight of its support to the proposals of the Fuehrer in Warsaw. (Compare especially document No. 73, page 161.)

2). It appears that Henderson personally supported the German proposal for the appearance of a Polish representative in Berlin. (Document No. 82, No. 3, page 180.) Henderson, moreover, informed his government that the Fuehrer had given him assurances that the Polish negotiator would be well received and that the negotiations would be carried on on a basis of complete equality, "as a matter of course." (Document No. 79, page 178.) Nevertheless the British Government did not transmit the German proposal of August 30th, to the Polish Government. It contented itself with conveying the information confidentially to its own ambassador in the Polish capital. The latter urgently advised against the dispatch of a negotiator. The British Government waited until the night from August 30th to August 31st, before instructing its Ambassador to inform Foreign Minister Beck of the German proposals. The British Government even now merely advised negotiations between Poland and Germany at the earliest possible moment, without lending any support to the German contention and justified its advice by a reference to public opinion. (Document No. 90, page 185.)

3). British intransigence was not without effect on Poland's attitude. Minister Beck conveyed to the British Ambassador on August 31st, his intense relief that the British Government had not obligated itself in any way with respect to the German demand. (Document No. 93, page 189.) Beck also declared that he would not go to Berlin, as a matter of course, even if he were invited, and that Lipski (the Polish Ambassador in Berlin) would not be authorized to receive the German proposals. He insisted that the details as to who was to negotiate with whom and where, and the basis of the negotiations must first be discussed. (Document No. 96, page 190.)

The Polish reply to London merely states the readiness of the Polish Government to enter into direct negotiations with the

German Government on the basis of the British memorandum of August 28th, but it fails to define its attitude toward those proposals contained in the German Memorandum of August 29th. (Germany's 16 Points.)* The Blue Book proves conclusively that Lipski's démarche indicated no concession, no change of heart, on the part of his Government.

4). It is to be noted that Henderson's report of August 30th enumerates correctly the substance of the German proposals, the so-called 16 points, which were conveyed to him and explained in detail by the German Foreign Minister. It appears from the instructions sent to the British Ambassador in Warsaw by Lord Halifax on August 31st at 1:45 p.m., that Henderson's report was conveyed simultaneously to Warsaw by Henderson. For Halifax instructed the British Ambassador in Warsaw (Kennard) with reference to Henderson's report, to inform the Polish Government. (Document No. 95, page 190.) This refutes the statement of British propagandists that Germany's 16 points were made known only subsequently to the Polish Government.

Section XIII: The Mediation Attempts of Third Powers

It is noteworthy that this section reproduces merely the familiar Stefani version of Mussolini's mediation proposal; British documents on the subject are missing. The student is therefore kept in the dark as to the fact that it was the British Government which frustrated Mussolini's proposals. France reacted favorably to Mussolini's proposal, in spite of the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and Poland. England, however, induced the French Government to relinquish its pacific attitude.

* Document No. 466 in this book.

C. Germany Refutes French Yellow Book

After the publication of the French Yellow Book, Germany issued four official statements in reply. A number of important documents bearing on Franco-German relations were made public for the first time. Germany proves that France, by repeated declarations, had fully agreed to recognize Eastern Europe as a German sphere of interest. France under pressure from the British War Party, violated and renounced these agreements by participating in the encirclement policy and finally, by letting Britain use Poland as a spark to light the powder-keg. German statements in refutation of the French book appeared on January 16, January 18, January 20 and January 25, 1940.

I.

Carrying the title "France's Betrayal of the German-French Declaration of December 6, 1938," Germany's first official answer to the French Yellow Book was issued in Berlin on January 16, 1940. The German Government charged that France broke its understanding not to hamper the Reich in Eastern Europe, a fact which France attempts to deny in the Yellow Book.

Two vital factors in German-French relations are at issue. These can be summarized as: A). Responsible leaders of French politics were fully informed regarding the Reich's attitude on all questions pertaining to Eastern Europe, and: B). This German attitude was fully recognized as the basis for French policy after the Munich Agreement and especially after the German-French Peace Declaration of December 6th.

"The French Yellow Book said that France, instead, consented to an understanding with Germany and agreed to the Franco-German Declaration of December 6th, on the condition that the French alliance system in Eastern Europe would be maintained," the German statement continues. This French viewpoint, the Reich demonstrates, complies in no way with the facts, "as can be proved by binding statements by responsible French statesmen."

In substantiating her charge, Germany presented a number of official and semi-official pronouncements and notes, which can be summarized as follows:

Berthod Announces New Policy

1). Report on foreign policy by Senator Berthod to the Radical Socialist Party Congress in Marseilles, in October 1938. This report was sanctioned by the Congress of the Radical Socialist Party, France's leading party, as the basis for France's new foreign policy. Prime Minister Daladier indicated his agreement with Berthod's program in his speech to the Party Congress on October 27, 1938.

Senator Berthod re-examined France's system of alliances in terms of the Czech crisis and its settlement. He called for a precise limitation of French obligations to those points which involved the vital interests of France. France, Berthod's report insisted, would not be resigning its position as a first class power, if in the future it regarded its position as a western, sea, African and colonial power of greater value to its Empire than playing the thankless role of gendarme and banker all over Europe, which France, in the intoxication of victory, had assumed itself called upon to do.

Cancelled Obligations

2). French government sources openly conceded that the new French foreign policy practically cancelled alliance obligations in Eastern Europe. This was explained by the government organ, "Le Temps," November 28th, in a semi-official article on the Ukrainian question in its effect on Franco-Polish relations. The article in "Le Temps" declared that "the collapse which occurred in Central Europe—a collapse for which the mistakes of Polish policy carry part of the responsibility—will naturally result in restricting more than ever the active interest which the Western Powers will display toward the crisis, which may occur in those parts of Europe."

3). The German-French Declaration was made on the basis of this new French policy. The circular of the French Foreign

Minister, published in the Yellow Book, which says that the problem of Eastern Europe was only casually mentioned, is misleading. Germany's position is proven by the copious notes on the talks in Paris in 1938 between von Ribbentrop and the French Foreign Minister Bonnet. Made public for the first time, these notes* were taken by Herr Schmidt, who acted as von Ribbentrop's interpreter during the Paris talks.

The Basis of New Franco-German Understanding

"These notes prove," as Germany points out, "that Herr von Ribbentrop distinctly gave M. Bonnet to understand that Germany regarded France's military alliance with Czechoslovakia and Poland as remains of the Versailles Treaty, which the Reich —having regained its strength—could no longer endure. Bonnet took special note of this viewpoint and accepted it for France by his reply that in these connections conditions had changed fundamentally since Munich.

"Bonnet did not contradict a statement by Reich Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop, that Germany regarded Czechoslovakia within its distinct sphere of influence. French Foreign Minister Bonnet, on the contrary, indicated that France regarded the four-power guarantee to be granted Czechoslovakia under certain conditions, as a tiresome reminder of the crumbled Franco-Czechoslovakia Alliance, to which no special importance was to be attached."

In any case Bonnet showed his willingness to continue the policy of Franco-German rapprochement on the basis of this clear exposition of Germany's attitude.

4). The new French policy met such strong resistance at home that M. Bonnet was compelled to strongly underline the full validity of the Franco-Polish Alliance and to reaffirm French interests in Eastern Europe in the course of a speech before the French Chamber on January 26, 1939.

* "Auszug aus der Aufzeichnung über die Unterredungen zwischen dem Reichsminister des Aeussern von Ribbentrop und dem französischen Aussenminister Bonnet am 6. 12. 1938 in Anwesenheit des Botschafters Grafen Welczeck und des Generalsekretärs am Quai d'Orsay Leger sowie des Gesandten Schmidt."

"As a matter of fact, however, Bonnet continued to feel bound by the assurance given to Herr von Ribbentrop regarding France's lack of interest in Eastern Europe," the German statement adds.

Bonnet Re-confirms December Agreement

This is proved in the German pronouncement by publication of two reports from the then German Ambassador to Paris, Count Welczeck, on conversations he had with Bonnet regarding the French Foreign Minister's speech.

Bonnet assured Count Welczeck, the latter wired* the German Foreign Office, that he had the promotion of Franco-German relations very much at heart, as he regarded the December agreement as by no means a meaningless formality. Bonnet considered the December agreement between Germany and France as the starting point for further conversations pointing toward a lasting improvement in relations between Paris and Berlin.

The most important passage of a second report** to Berlin by Count Welczeck contained assurance from Bonnet that his speech of January 26, 1939, before the Chamber was meant for home consumption. Bonnet told the Count that "often in foreign political debates in the Chamber things were said which obviously were meant for internal consumption and were not meant to go beyond the borders."

5). Finally the German statement publishes the corroborating conversation*** between von Ribbentrop and the French Ambassador to Berlin, Robert Coulondre. In the course of this conversation, dealing primarily with Bonnet's speech to the Senate, Coulondre definitely repeated that France "will undertake no policy in Eastern Europe that would disturb Germany."

In conclusion, it becomes evident that France had been informed by competent German sources in December, 1938, and as late as February, 1939, of German claims for recognition of

* "Der Deutsche Botschafter in Paris an das Auswärtige Amt." (Digest) Jan. 24, 1939.
** "Der Deutsche Botschafter in Paris an das Auswärtige Amt." Paris. Feb. 13, 1939.
*** "Aufzeichnungen über die Unterredung des Reichsministers des Auswärtigen mit dem französischen Botschafter."

sphere of interest in Eastern Europe and that M. Bonnet gave Herr von Ribbentrop a binding assurance that France would not oppose these claims.

Prodded by Britain, France Changes Front

"Under British influence France renounced this policy in the spring of 1939. By intervening in Eastern European questions that did not conflict in any way with French interests, France deprived the German-French accord of its basis and helped England in unleashing the war."

II.

In her second official statement of January 18th on the French Yellow Book, Germany charged that Britain shattered all hopes of a Franco-German understanding at the very time when it appeared that Paris and Berlin were making headway in an effort to relieve the tension existing between the two neighboring powers.

The second German pronouncement on the French Yellow Book, which deals with the causes of the war according to the French viewpoint, declares:

"As proved a short time ago by the publication of documentary material on the visit of German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop to Paris in December, 1938, preliminary conditions for a real and lasting relief of Franco-German tension appeared to have been established for the first time in many years during the winter of 1938 and 1939.

"Germany, by renouncing a revision of her western frontier in writing, had finally excluded the possibility of German policy interfering with the sphere of French interest.

"France, through Foreign Minister M. Bonnet, had declared that since the Munich conference, her attitude toward eastern European questions had undergone a complete change. France had made it clear that in the future she would not disturb Germany's vital interests in central and eastern Europe.

"Despite inner political resistance of various kinds, the French Government had managed to follow the course of this new realistic policy until March, 1939. It was only after March 17, 1939, when Britain's encirclement policy became a political program, that the promising beginning made toward a Franco-German understanding was destroyed with one blow.

"It became evident at once that France followed unconditionally in the wake of British policy."

France Endorses England's Blank Check to Poland

The blank check given by Britain to Poland, the German statement went on, was also signed by France. In addition, the one-sided British pledges to Rumania and Greece were also countersigned by France. Turkey, in the interest of Britain, was given the Sanjak of Alexandretta. In an effort to bring Russia into the encirclement front, France also played a major role.

"Thus, France in the spring of 1939, by playing a big part in the encirclement front," said the German pronouncement, "had destroyed the basis of the German-French peace declaration of December 6, 1938."

Despite the trend of events, French Foreign Minister Bonnet was taken to task in mid-July, 1939, by authoritative German quarters, which drew M. Bonnet's attention to France's altered political course and to the catastrophic consequences of the blank check which had been handed to Warsaw.

On July 1, Bonnet handed a note to the German Ambassador to Paris, Count von Welczeck, to be forwarded to Herr von Ribbentrop. In his note to the Reich Minister, Bonnet said that a provision had been made in the German-French declaration concerning the lasting validity of the Franco-Polish alliance. Bonnet also made it clear that France intended to keep every promise given Poland.

Herr von Ribbentrop replied to M. Bonnet in a personal letter dated July 13, 1939.

Ribbentrop Writes to Bonnet

Von Ribbentrop reminded Bonnet of the Franco-German peace declaration of December 6, 1938, in which Germany renounced all claims for a revision of her western frontier. Von Ribbentrop's reply also pointed out that Germany had long sought a good-neighborly understanding with France and still adhered to that policy.

The Ribbentrop letter continued:

"Concerning your remark about the reservation in Article Three of the German-French declaration regarding special relations of France and Germany to third powers, it is by no means the case that this reservation embodied special relations between France and Poland. In negotiations which took place in Berlin and Paris, and at the time the German-French declaration was signed, there was complete understanding to the effect that the reservation concerned the specific relationship and friendship of France to Britain and of Germany to Italy. In particular, we jointly established in our conversations of December 6th in Paris that consideration of our mutual vital interests was a preliminary condition for the future development of good relations between the Reich and France.

"In so doing, I explicitly pointed to eastern Europe as a German sphere of interest and you—quite in contrast to the assertion in your letter—emphasized at that time that fundamental changes had taken place in France's attitude toward eastern Europe since the Munich Conference. It is in direct contradiction to this attitude established by us in the beginning of December that France used the Fuehrer's generous suggestion to Poland for a settlement of the Danzig question and its somewhat peculiar Polish reaction as an inducement to enter new and stronger obligations with Poland against Germany.

"At the end of your note, these obligations are set forth to the effect that France would immediately lend military assistance to Poland in the event that the status quo be changed regarding Danzig or in case of any military intervention in Poland.

"Regarding this policy of the French Government, I must state the following:

Berlin Rejects French Interference in Vital Sphere

"Just as Germany never interfered with the vital French spheres of interest, Germany must reject most energetically once and for all time French interference in the Reich's vital interests. The forming of German relations with her eastern neighbor affects no French interests whatsoever but is wholly a matter of German policy.

"The Reich therefore does not find itself in a position to discuss German-Polish negotiations with France, or even to grant the French Government the right to assume an attitude on questions which are linked up with the future status of the German city of Danzig."

Herr von Ribbentrop went on to recall that the Polish Government spurned Chancellor Hitler's proposals for a peaceful solution of the German-Polish issues. Von Ribbentrop commented on Poland's threatening attitude and warned Bonnet that the German army would annihilate the Poles if the Poles violated Danzig territory.

Von Ribbentrop, in his letter, took issue with Bonnet's statement that France appreciates Poland's right to resist any change in the status of Danzig with arms, and that France would attack Germany if the Reich used force on Poland.

"Should this really be the intention of French policy," said von Ribbentrop's note to Bonnet, "I must ask you to take note that such threats would only strengthen the Fuehrer in his determination to protect German interests with all of the means at his disposal. The Fuehrer has always desired a French-German understanding, and has characterized as mad any war between states which have no conflict of vital interests."

Ribbentrop's Solemn Warning

Von Ribbentrop pointed out, however, that if France wanted war, she would find Germany prepared. The German Foreign Minister pointed out that responsibility for a Franco-German war would rest with France. Continuing, the von Ribbentrop letter said: "In view of our pleasant personal relations, I regret

that your letter forced me to make this reply. I do not wish to abandon hope that reason will prevail ultimately, and that the French people will realize where their real interests lie. Since I have advocated a German-French understanding for more than twenty years, such an accord would for me fulfill a sincere desire."

The German statement points out that France, back in July 1939—before Polish provocations reached their climax—had been warned of the consequences of Poland's aggressive attitude, an attitude which England desired and fostered.

Not the slightest doubt was left that Germany's urgent desire for an understanding with her western neighbor must find its natural limit in the necessity of safeguarding German vital interests and for the protection of the German people.

The German statement reiterates that France was warned repeatedly that the Reich would fight to defend its rights and interests. But these warnings were ignored. France to the last followed in England's footsteps.

III.

By spring 1939 France was preparing to wage war against Germany, the German Government proves in its third official statement of January 20th, on the French Yellow Book. Leading figures in the French Government were opposed to any delay in forcing an issue.

These charges are substantiated by publication of two reports to Berlin by Dr. C. Brauer, German Chargé d'Affaires in Paris, dated April 10 and April 22, 1939. The basis for these reports were statements of Cesar Campinchi, French Naval Minister, and a key man in Daladier's Cabinet and party. "The French Naval Minister Campinchi recently very frankly stated his views on the political situation to a trusted person who in turn informed me . . ." (Report of April 10th.)

France Determined on War

Campinchi said that war with Germany was inevitable and that not only he, but the other members of the Cabinet as well

as the General Staff shared this opinion and believed that France would have to attack Germany. (Report of April 22nd.)

Dr. Brauer reported that the English and French were unwilling to tolerate a powerful German leadership in the affairs of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Cesar Campinchi hoped to get the war going as a coalition war against Germany by using the latent German-Polish conflict as an ignition spark.

Campinchi pointed out that Germany had left the solution of the problem of the Polish Corridor and the separation of Danzig from the Reich to the last because she believed the lack of logic of that situation would not make it difficult to solve it satisfactorily for Germany.

But Campinchi emphasized, this was a miscalculation on Germany's part because the Western Powers had reached a stage where they would be ready to go to war for Poland, "not so much out of sympathy for the threatened people in the East, but because France wished to bring Germany's extension to a standstill." (Report of April 22nd.)

Campinchi believed that Polish Foreign Minister Beck might already have reached an agreement on the controversy. But, nevertheless, Beck could not go against the majority of the Polish people. Beck might resign one day and then the Polish people would demand the maintenance of the status quo in Danzig and the Corridor, in which case France and Britain would automatically march against Germany. Further, Campinchi felt, guarantees must be forced on Rumania, Jugoslavia and Greece, whether they wanted them or not. (Report of April 22nd.)

French Plans to Smash Italy

A war to smash Italy was also considered, the reports indicate. "England," according to the statement, "had already done some 'good work' in the Italian Empire especially in Abyssinia. He was in a position to say with assurance that England needed only to push on a war to bring Italy to complete collapse. In the Italian colonies, especially in Abyssinia, the natives were only

waiting to have rifles placed in their hands." (Report of April 22nd.)

Confident of victory, Campinchi predicted that "a peace would be forced on her beside which the Versailles Treaty would be nothing . . ." (Report of April 10th.)

France, the German disclosures reveal, had been persuaded to fight as early as spring, 1939. France was now willing to join England in efforts to check German influence in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, despite the fact (as shown in the first and second German statements, summarized above) that France had previously agreed to give Germany a free hand in her sphere of interest in Eastern Europe.

IV.

French diplomacy stands convicted of duplicity by its own testimony, Germany demonstrated in her fourth official reply to the French Yellow Book.

Robert Coulondre, French Ambassador to Berlin from November 1938 to the outbreak of the war, publicly supported a permanent Franco-German understanding with great vigor, but behind the scenes he actually did everything in his power to smash all hopes of such a rapprochement. Coulondre's reports, set forth in the French Yellow Book, which purports to describe the events leading up to the war, clearly indicate the dual role he played.

These documents published by the French also show that Coulondre did everything possible to prevent a peaceful solution of German-Polish problems.

"It will surprise no one who knew M. Coulondre personally," the German pronouncement said, "that he was a typical representative of the Quai d'Orsay, and he remained true to the traditional French policies. It will surprise no one that M. Coulondre did not possess the breadth of mind to appreciate the creative ideas of new European policy.

"Coulondre's reports, nevertheless, deserve particular attention since they seek in quite a degree to hide that lack of political farsightedness behind a constant repetition of attacks on Germany."

Out of Their Own Mouths

The German statement finds it astonishing that the French Government should have allowed those reports, which testify against its own policy, to form one of the chief parts of its Yellow Book. Germany comes to the conclusion that Coulondre must have been the chief editor of the Yellow Book, or have written it himself.

"These reports in the Yellow Book," said the German statement, "prove that Coulondre supported the anti-German policy of encirclement. On March 19th last, he advised setting up a barrier in eastern Europe. In this connection, advantage could be taken of the uneasiness prevailing in Warsaw and other capitals. At the same time, France could increase her armaments as rapidly as possible.

"On April 29th, the day following the Fuehrer's conciliatory speech, Coulondre reported that it would be possible to hold Germany in check by further rearmament and by strengthening the Allies' anti-German system of alliances. Coulondre did everything he could to prevent Poland from coming to an understanding with Germany. He considered that Polish acceptance of Germany's generous offer would be fraught with danger for France.

"Coulondre warned his Government on July 11th against any attempt to induce Poland to make concessions. Again on August 27th, Coulondre told his Government not to leave the impression that the Western Powers were 'impatiently awaiting some possible adjustment of the German-Polish problems.' "

Oppose Polish-German Understanding

"During the night of August 29th and August 30th, Coulondre telephoned his Government that he agreed with the British Ambassador (Sir Nevile Henderson) that Poland should

appoint a negotiator to travel to Berlin in order to 'prove her good will in the eyes of the world.' Coulondre added, however, that a journey of Beck (Polish Foreign Minister Joseph Beck) to Berlin would entail serious disadvantages since it could be interpreted as a moral success for Germany, and as a sign that Poland was inclined to yield.

"Thus, Coulondre gives clear proof of the fact that the Western Powers never desired serious German-Polish negotiations on Germany's just demands. *Ambassador Coulondre, who assured every German in Berlin that he would do everything he could to render German-French relations as satisfactory as possible, was in reality one of the grave-diggers of a Franco-German understanding.* It would be paying him too much honor to attribute to him the role of a leading political figure. He was merely a zealous assistant of those circles in Paris whose tendencies he knew and wished to encourage by his reports."

M. Coulondre, the Germans pointed out, helped his influential friends in Paris, who had been taken in tow by the British, to influence the French Government to declare war on Germany.

Continuing, the German pronouncement added that M. Coulondre was apparently one of the men who played a major role in France's cynical rejection of Adolf Hitler's peace offer on October 6, 1939.

In its first three official replies to the Yellow Book, Germany conclusively demonstrated that France had agreed to a new basis for French-German relations. France recognized Eastern Europe as a German sphere of interest, and apparently was willing to end her system of anti-German alliances. As this and the earlier statements prove, France refused to live up to the understanding and joined with England in efforts to build up an anti-German front in Eastern Europe.

D. The American Edition of "Polish Acts of Atrocity Against the German Minority in Poland"

German Minority in Poland

Immediately after the restoration of order in Poland, which followed the swift German military success of last September, the German Government undertook a thorough medico-legal investigation of atrocities.* The basic grounds for these painstaking inquiries were the reports by both German and neutral observers of innumerable and inconceivable atrocities committed against the German minority in Poland.** The investigations revealed really appalling results which seemed at first, to say the least, hard to believe, yet proved to be absolutely true. Hundreds of depositions concerning frightful cruelties that had been inflicted indiscriminately upon the Germans in Poland—men, women and children; the healthy and the disabled; the young and the aged—were substantiated down to the minutest details by sworn testimony, eye-witness accounts, confessions, autopsies and examinations of bodies.

It was to bring before the eyes of the civilized world the exposition of these barbaric crimes against a helpless and oppressed racial minority, that the German Government directed the special investigating commissions to compile and coordinate their findings into a complete report, with view toward publication. The resultant material was amazing both in bulk and in content. From this wealth of frightful truth a representative selection was made, the result being the official publication, "Polish Acts of Atrocity Against the German Minority in Poland."***

The American Edition

The German Library of Information in New York published the American Edition of the book on Polish atrocities. The first

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* Participated in by the Army High Command Commission of Investigation, the Tribunals of Bromberg and Posen, the Commissions of the Chief of the Security Police, the Army Health Department and various subsidiaries.

** See "Atrocities and Atrocities", Vol. I. No. 12, and "The Roll Call of the Slain", Vol. I. No. 16, of "Facts in Review".

*** "Die Polnischen Greueltaten an den Volksdeutschen in Polen". See the detailed review, "Official Report on the Systematic Extermination of the German Minority in Poland", in Vol. II. No. 9, of "Facts in Review".

paragraphs of the Introductory Note to this edition affords the reader a brief background and resume of what follows:

"The German Library of Information presents herewith a translation of numerous documents, published by authority of the German Foreign Office, on the systematic outrages perpetrated by Polish civilians and soldiers upon the German minority in Poland, in the first few days of the present war. Public opinion is properly skeptical of 'atrocities.' The world has grown not only distrustful but callous. We have learned to our sorrow that, with millions under arms, occasional individual brutalities are bound to occur in wartime. For these reasons public opinion wisely hesitates to ascribe sporadic atrocities to a deliberate government policy. Unfortunately such skepticism is not warranted in the present instance. There are atrocities and atrocities.

"Every incident recited in the ensuing pages is authenticated in detail. This book is not a collection of vague rumors and hearsay, like the charges made recently against the Germans by Polish and Anglo-French propagandists. Nor is it a deliberate concoction, like the notorious Bryce Report* fabricated in the World War to stimulate recruiting and to create sympathy for the Allies. The Bryce Report, in the words of Professor H. C. Peterson,** 'is one of the most extreme examples of the definition of Propaganda as 'assassination by word.' 'It was in itself,' Professor Peterson goes on to say, 'one of the worst atrocities of the war.'

"Unlike the appended documents, the Bryce Report was, in the opinion of competent historians, based largely upon second and third-hand information, rumors and opinions indiscriminately included, statements elicited or suggested by leading questions, incomplete versions of actual events, and barrack-room gossip. Yet it influenced world opinion profoundly. To this day the 'crucified Canadian'—long disowned by the Canadian Government—and mutilated Belgian babies stalk through the imagination of humankind. Lord Ponsonby in his able study,***

* Report of the German Outrages Inquiry Committee, appointed in 1914 by the British Prime Minister.
** "Propaganda for War—The Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914-1917." (University of Oklahoma Press, 1939).
*** Arthur Ponsonby, "Falsehood in Wartime," 1928.

has traced the development of the most widely circulated lies. The armless Belgian babe, the crucified Canadian,* the Corpse Factory for the extraction of fat, have been consigned to the limbo of discredited myths, accompanied by tearful confessions of British and French statesmen.**

"Signor Nitti, Italian Prime Minister during the World War, and Mr. Lloyd George, carried on extensive investigations as to the truth of the horrible accusations made against the Germans, but 'every case investigated proved to be a myth.' Bryce himself toward the end of his days seems to have been conscious of having lent his honored name to a collection of falsifications. 'A friend of the writer,' reveals Dr. Harry Elmer Barnes,*** 'approached James Bryce about the Bryce Report some time before Mr. Bryce's death, but the latter refused to attempt any defense beyond the assertion that one must expect almost anything in war-time.' 'We may,' explains Frederick Palmer,† 'look back on Lord Bryce's signing of the atrocity report as a venerable statesman's 'bit,' when, in the name of its beloved dead and wounded, every combatant nation realized that its future was to be signed and sealed by victory or defeat at arms.' It would be an error, however, to regard the German Report on Polish Atrocities in a similar light.

"The present Report should meet the requirements of the most painstaking investigator of current history. Rumor, hearsay, unverified statements are rigidly excluded. The evidence is gathered from legal proceedings. The reader is confronted by page after page of documents, sworn testimony, expert medical opinion, photographs. Instead of unverified gossip the student will find facts legally established by the courts, by Army Commissions, and by police investigations. Nor is the report merely the elaboration of an occasional misdeed by an hysterical murderer. It discloses the existence of a systematic campaign

* Letter on the crucified Canadian from the Canadian Department of National Defense, in "Spreading Germs of Hate" (page 311).

** Excellent standard works on World War Propaganda are: H. D. Laswell: "Propaganda Technique in the World War," London and New York, 1927; J. D. Squires: "British Propaganda at Home and in the United States from 1914-1917," Cambridge, 1935.

*** "In Quest of Truth and Justice," 1929.

† Frederick Palmer: "With My Own Eyes."

of destruction, carried on not only by armed civilians, but by responsible officials of the Polish Government."

The American edition follows the German text with slight condensations. A revised resumé of the dead and missing precedes the actual documents.*

"Sources and Explanatory Comments" represent an historical review of the relations between Germany and Poland and supply the background for the tragic events described in the volume.

The 110 documents that follow are either excerpts from, or the complete content of sworn statements and depositions of eye-witnesses or official reports of the various commissions of investigations.

The last few pages of the text are devoted to the *"Report of the Medical Examiners,"* in which are presented the aims of the examiners, the investigation undertaken, and the results of that investigation.

Pictorial Evidence

Appended to the text of both the German and the American Editions are special sections of pictorial evidence compiled by the various investigations. The original edition contains more than a hundred pages of such matter, which includes dead and missing notices, photostatic copies of depositions and other statements, photographs of murder and mutilation victims and the scenes of both individual and mass murders.

The American Edition devotes only 48 pages to its pictorial supplement. The rest of the material—those photographs which depict the most gruesome horrors—too shocking for general circulation—appears separately in a special supplementary volume. This second volume is limited and is available to government officials, librarians, medical men, professors and students only, by application to the German Library of Information, 17 Battery Place, New York City.

* When the German Edition went to press on November 17, 1939, the total of known Polish murders was 5,437. Since then, further investigation revealed that murder victims numbered at least 12,857. The total number of Germans dead or missing was estimated at 58,000 on February 1, 1940.